

CAIRO (AP) — Saudi Arabia differs with the United States over the investigation into last year's bombing that killed 19 U.S. servicemen, a Saudi prince said in an interview published Monday.

Prince Salman Ben Abdul Aziz, the powerful governor of the Saudi capital Riyadh and a brother of King Fahd, also insisted that the kingdom maintains a policy independent of the United States.

"Talking about our connections to the Americans is not true because our decision-making is independent and nobody, including America, can have a role in that," Prince Salman told the Saudi newspaper Ashraq Al Awsat, which is based in London.

"The proof of that is that we differ with the Americans on the Al Khobar explosion," he said, without elaboration.

Top U.S. officials have

publicly rebuked the Saudis is for frustrating their efforts to find out who was responsible for the bombing of the Khobar Towers apartment complex in Dhahran in June 1996. Inside Saudi Arabia, secrecy has shrouded the investigation, and Saudi officials have been reluctant to comment.

But Saudi security sources have suggested that several Shiite Muslims with links to Shiite Iran are among the suspects.

That charge has been dismissed by Shiite dissidents in Saudi Arabia who contend that the Saudi government is using the explosion as a pretext to target the disadvantaged minority, which has been agitating for better job opportunities and living conditions.

Others have stressed that majority Sunni Muslims were also among the suspects. Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, faces home-grown opposition among

Sunni activists opposed to its ties with the West and critical of widespread corruption.

In other remarks, Prince Salman said Saudi Arabia was grateful for the Americans for their role in the 1991 Gulf war. About 5,000 U.S. military personnel have since remained in Saudi Arabia.

"America stood with us and sacrificed its sons... And this is something which we appreciate," he said.



Lebanese army patrol walks by workers hanging up the Vatican and Lebanese flags in Beirut's streets on Monday (Reuters photo)

BAGHDAD (R) — An Iraqi government newspaper called on the United Nations on Monday to reproach the United States for blocking the implementation of Iraq's oil-for-food deal with the world body.

"Does not neutrality require from the U.N. representatives to direct an official accusation to the United States for blackmailing the application of the oil deal?," Abul Juhouriya asked in an open letter addressed to visiting U.N. Under-Secretary General Yasushi Akashi.

The deal agreed in December allows Iraq to sell \$2 billion of oil over six months to buy food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies, as an exception to the sanctions imposed on Baghdad by the U.N. after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Iraq has frequently complained that the Security Council's Iraqi Sanctions Committee is slow in approving contracts for the purchase of humanitarian goods. It blames the U.S. representative at the committee for causing the delay.

"Fourteen members of the Sanctions Committee have approved contracts (submitted by Iraq) except the American representative. This proves the U.S. administration is deliberately impeding its application," the paper said.

The Iraqi government began on Sunday distributing additional food rations under the oil agreement. No medicine, however, has reached the country under the deal.

Al Jumbouriya said: "Five months have elapsed since the start of its imple-

mentation, until now Iraq has not received even one tablet of aspirin."

Mr. Akashi, who is responsible for humanitarian affairs at the world body, arrived in Baghdad on Saturday to review problems in the implementation of the deal. He travelled on Monday to the Kurdish north which has been out of the control of the central government since the 1991 Gulf war over Kuwait.

"The U.N. is responsible for impoverishing Iraq, for causing genocide in it and threatening its sovereignty and territorial integrity as you will see in northern Iraq," the paper said.

It called on the U.N. envoy to leave with a balanced conclusion on the situation in Iraq "away from influences that come from outside the United Nations."

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Violence against Jews dropped around the world last year although anti-Semitic groups turned increasingly to the Internet to spread their message of hate, according to a report received Monday.

The annual antisemitism report by Tel Aviv University found that the number of major attacks against Jews and Jewish targets — ranging from firebombings and arson to shootings — fell from 72 in 1994 and 41 in 1995 to 32 in 1996.

In Europe, there were only nine attacks registered last year, compared to 31 in 1994, it said.

Most of the material disseminated in English from the United States and Canada and includes sites offered by deniers of the holocaust of Jews by Nazis during World War II.

Several sites noted by the Israeli press on Monday, which was "holocaust martyrs' and heroes' remembrance day" in Israel, were run by groups with names such as Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust, White Pride, and Racial Diversity,

ASMARA (R) — Sudanese rebels said on Sunday they ambushed a Sudanese army convoy on the Red Sea coast Saturday, killing 18 soldiers and taking two prisoners.

Rebel spokesman Yassir Araman said the ambush was the work of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), an opposition coalition which unites northerners and the southerners of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

He said the ambush took place close to Marfrit, a village and military garrison between the village of Aqiq and the coast about 50 kilometres northeast of the border with Eritrea

"(They) engaged and destroyed an NIF (National Islamic Front) convoy composed of one battalion intending to overrun our position around Marfrit," he added.

The NIF is the Islamist movement which guides the military-dominated government in Khartoum.

"The NIF convoy fell in a deliberate ambush of our forces and was scattered and dispersed, leaving 18 of the soldiers dead on the ground. We also captured a truck, 18 Kalashnikov rifles and large amounts of ammunition and shells," said Mr. Arman.

The rebels had taken two NIF soldiers prisoner, he added.

The spokesman said he did not know how many rebel troops were deployed in the ambush or the number of rebel casualties.

NDA forces launched their second major offensive this year on several fronts in March. SPLA rebels in the south have captured garrisons and towns around the main city Juba.

CAIRO (AP) — An Iraqi Kurdish leader held talks Sunday with senior Egyptian officials amid signs that Egypt is trying to court Iraqi opposition groups.

Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), arrived Saturday night from Iran. His group is one of the two main Kurdish factions in northern Iraq.

His visit comes weeks after a delegation from the rival Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) held similar talks with Egyptian officials.

Mr. Talabani said he discussed with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa the situation in Iraq and assured him that Kurds in northern Iraq do not seek separation from the rest of the country.

ANKARA (AFP) — At least 17 members of an Iraqi family drowned and four people were missing as two boats smuggling illegal Iraqi refugees from Turkey to a Greek island sank overnight in the Aegean Sea, local officials said late Sunday.

The two Turkish boats sank after leaving the coast near Kusadasi port, 300 kilometres southwest of Istanbul, for the Greek island of Samos late Saturday night, one coast guard

official in Kusadasi told AFP by telephone.

Coast guard officials recovered the bodies of 17 Iraqis from the Ahmad family, including four women and five children, he said. Adding four people were missing following the worst sea accident in the region in decades.

At least two Turkish seamen were believed to be among the missing.

One Iraqi man who had managed to swim to shore told Turkish authorities that

the smaller boat began to sink off Turkey's Dilek Peninsula shortly after departure, according to the Anatolia news agency.

Nasraddin Ahmad, 18, said seven people on board were transferred to the bigger boat, which then overturned and sank.

"It was a terrible sight, no one could help the others as one drowned after another," Mr. Ahmad was quoted by Anatolia as telling the Turkish authorities.

The area where the boats

Mr. Ahmad said his family had left northern Iraq three years ago and settled in Istanbul.

His family last week agreed with illegal refugee dealers in Istanbul on their transport to Samos in return for \$3,000 per adult, he said.

Each year hundreds of illegal refugees, mainly from Iraq, Iran and Pakistan,

attempt to cross to the Greek islands from Turkey's Aegean and Mediterranean ports.

Fleeing their countries mainly for economic reasons, the illegal refugees seek to travel on to western Europe in search of jobs.

In April, the bodies of five Iranian women and children hit the Turkish coast near Kusadasi after a boat carrying them to Greece apparently sank in the Aegean.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 723.11.19
PROGRAMME TWO

15.35	Super Programme
16.00	French Sports Follies
16.30	Dog House
17.00	Recreation for the Testiest
17.15	The Night Show
18.00	Frontal Programme
19.30	News Headline
19.35	Doc. The
20.00	Encounter
21.10	Doc.	Nature of Things
22.00	News in English
22.25	Snowy River
23.00	Mission Impossible

PRAYER TIMES

04.15	Fajr
05.41	Sunrise/Duha
12.32	Dhuhr
16.12	Asr
19.23	Maghrib
20.50	Tahajjud

PRAYER TIMES

04:15	Fajr
05:41	Sunrise; Dawn
12:32	Dhuhr
16:12	'Asr
19:23	Maghrib
20:50	'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweiffsh. Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church
Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to

rise with moderate weather conditions prevailing and winds northerly to northeasterly moderate. Gradual rise in temperatures is expected on Wednesday and Thursday. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman	08/24
Aqaba	16/31
Deserts	07/27
Jordan Valley	15/30

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 19, Aqaba 26 Humidity readings: Amman 50 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Yousef Rashid875792
Dr. Walid Al Masri675485
Dr. Khalil Jbali740740
Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiab758848
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660

Nairoukh pharmacy623672
Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu281484
Al Quds pharmacy(—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Halaseh982799
Khalifah pharmacy985417

EMERGECIES
Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Dept.661111
Civil Defence Immediate Res-
cue630541
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192 621111

Rescue Police 192, 621111.
638777

Fire Brigade	617101
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010250

Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623/01
Abdali Telephone Repairs
661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority
..... 815615
Electric Power Company
636381
RJ Flight Information
0853200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-
53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre
813813/32

Khalidi Maternity.....	64281/6
Akbeh Maternity.....	64244/1/2
Jabal Amman	64235/2
Malhas, J. Amman	63614/0
Palestine, Shmeisani	60707/1
Shmeisani Hospital	66913/1
University Hospital	84584/5
Al-Muasher Hospital	66727/19
The Islamic, Abdali	666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhsajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marika 891611/15
Queen Aifa Hospital
6022/40/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart
and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital
..... (09)900560
Bn Sma Hospital .. (09)86752
Al Hikma Modern Hospital
..... (09)890990

109-1990990
IPR.D.

Princess Basma Hospital
 (02)275555
 Greek Catholic Hospital
 (02)272275
 Ibn Al Nafees Hospital
 (02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
 08:00 Damascus (RJ)

08:45	Osaka, Bangkok, Dubai (add) (RJ)
09:45	Sanaa, Aqaba (RJ)
10:15	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
10:25	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:55	Muscat, Dufai (RJ)
11:05	Beirut (RJ)
17:20	Cairo (RJ)
17:30	London (RJ)
17:40	Frankfurt (RJ)
18:30	Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:15	Jakarta (add) (RJ)
02:30	Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

06:05	London, Damascus (RJ)
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06:05 London, Damascus (BA)
13:00 " " " "

14:40	Munich (YP)
18:05	Kiev (LU)
19:15	Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:10	Cairo (MS)
21:30	Tel Aviv (LY)
22:50	Aden (TY)
23:35	Larnaca (CY)
01:25	Jakarta (GA)
03:00	Rome (AZ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:20	Beirut (RJ)
09:30	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

12:15..... Vienna, Brussels (RJ)
13:00..... Geneva, Frankfurt (RJ)
13:00..... Paris (RJ)
13:15..... Cairo (RJ)
13:30..... Madrid (RJ)
14:00..... London (RJ)
21:20..... Jeddah (RJ)
21:40..... Damascus (RJ)
22:00 ... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:50 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)
04:00..... Jeddah (RJ)
05:00..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

08:55	.....Damascus, London (KJ)
04:30	.....Riyadh (SV)
15:30	.....Munich (YP)
19:05	.....Kiev (LU)
20:15	.....Dubai (EK)
22:30	.....Cairo (MS)
22:50	.....Tel Aviv (LY)
23:50	.....Aden (TY)
01:55	.....Bucharest (RO)
02:25	.....London (GA)
02:30	.....Amsterdam (KL)
04:00	.....Athens (OA)
06:00	.....Athens (OA)

Queen meets with executive director of the International Eye Foundation...

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday met with the Executive Director of the International Eye Foundation (IEF) Victoria Sheffield, who is participating in the Fourth International Congress of the Arab Council of Ophthalmology in Amman under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein.

Ms. Sheffield thanked Queen Noor for accepting an IEF Board of Directors' invitation to join their new Honorary Board last year, stating that "invitees to the Honorary Board are people who have combated avoidable blindness around the world and have supported IEF programmes in the past," a Royal Court statement said.

The nine members of the Honorary Board include His Highness Prince Faisal Ben Farhan Ben Abdullah Al-Faisal Al-Saud, Baroness Garnet de Stackelberg and

Dr. Frank Newel, one of the United States' leading ophthalmologists.

Queen Noor, who is the Patron of the New Jordan Eye Bank and of the British Society of the St. John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem, commended the global ophthalmology conference's initiative to form national committees for the establishment of country registries of the blind. The latter will include comprehensive documentation of the causes of disease and means of treating them. Such a registry is of particular importance as, of the 38 million blind and the 115 million visually impaired worldwide, 4 out of 5 have preventable or curable conditions and are "needlessly blind," the statement said.

Having been severely visually impaired since childhood and having had to rely on prescription glasses, Queen Noor has a special

concern and interest in this matter, according to the statement.

The IEF was founded in 1961 as the International Eye Bank and then incorporated as the International Eye Foundation in 1969 after assuming a leadership role in public health ophthalmology. In 1985, the IEF became the first international eye care non-governmental organisation to be granted "official relations" with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and works closely with the WHO Programme for the Prevention of Blindness in Geneva, the statement said.

A total of 60 countries have benefited from IEF programmes in the last 35 years, which include training ranging from private eye care to sub-special ophthalmology as well as clinical, surgical and preventive services.

In 1978 and 1979, the IEF assisted the Ministry of

Health in opening the New Jordan Eye Bank at the Jordan University Hospital and provided training, technical expertise, surgical and eye banking equipment for the project.

Jordan was the first country in the Arab world to pass a law permitting the donation of eye tissue to the Jordan Eye Bank, which is administered by representatives from the four sectors of Jordan's health services: the Ministry of Health, the Royal Medical Services, the Jordan University Hospital and the private sector.

Since its establishment, surgeons from Arab countries have attended training sessions organised by the IEF and the Jordanian Eye Bank Committee. To date Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt have opened eye banks for transplant surgeries, the statement concluded.

Centrist parties submit request to register merger

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The secretaries general of nine centrist parties on Monday submitted an application to the Ministry of Interior to register their merger into the National Constitutional Party (NCP), party sources announced.

The secretaries general were received by Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid, who will now refer the application to the ministry's legal advisors for approval, the same sources said.

A merger of one large and seven smaller nationalist-centrist parties was announced in early March. The move was seen by observers as an attempt to counterbalance Jordan's strongest opposition party, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), with the establishment of a unified centrist bloc ahead of this autumn's parliamentary elections.

In the last few days, the Jordanian Popular Movement (JPM), headed by Jamal Khatib, joined the newly announced bloc, becoming the ninth party in the merger.

One of the youngest parties in the Kingdom, the JPM was officially registered in October 1996 as Jordan's 25th party. Until the merger of

the nine centrist parties is made official, there will continue to be 26 political groupings on Jordan's political scene.

The other parties merging into the NCP are: The Jordanian National Alliance, the Popular Unity Party, Al Ahd, Progress and Justice, the Reawakening Party, Al Wa'ed, Al Watan, and the Jordanian Arab Masses Party.

Giving a positive account of the meeting between the nine secretaries general and Mr. Rashid, Secretary General of Al Wa'ed Anis Muasher told the Jordan Times he expects that the registration procedure will be finalised "in the next two to three days."

In an earlier meeting on Saturday, the secretaries general had officially declared their intention to dissolve their parties in view of an official endorsement of the merger by the Ministry of Interior.

After an unspecified interim period, in which the leaderships of the nine parties will collectively be the NCP's "acting" leadership, general elections will be held to elect a new secretariat.

In a telephone interview with the Jordan Times, Secretary General of Al Watan and NCP Spokesperson Hakim Kheir said that the party's

internal elections are not linked to the upcoming parliamentary elections, but might be held afterwards.

According to Mr. Muasher, the interim period might last "one year." Regardless of the timing of its internal elections, the NCP has repeatedly announced its decision to field candidates in a unified list for this autumn's general elections.

The NCP will put particular emphasis on economic reforms, Mr. Muasher told the Jordan Times in an earlier interview, including "the privatisation and liberalisation process and all the economic reforms which have been promised by governments, but never realised."

He announced that the NCP will also present an economic plan, and suggest methods for its implementation. The economic plan should be publicised "in the early days of the party," he added.

In addition to the economic reforms, the NCP will focus in its election campaign on "social development and the unity of all Jordanians, who should work together to build a modern Jordan, rather than wasting time discussing who's who and what's what."

...meets with president-elect of Rotary Int'l...

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday met with president-elect of Rotary International Glen Kinnross, one of Australia's prominent businessmen, at Al Ma'wa Palace, a Royal Court statement said.

Queen Noor, who is the patron of the Rotary Club of Amman Cosmopolitan, expressed her pride in the activities of the nine Rotary Clubs in Jordan, which have implemented 45 social, com-

munity and voluntary projects, and in particular for Rotary's Breast Cancer Awareness Project.

The latter included a Breast Cancer walkathon, which raised funds for a mobile mammography machine for women living in remote areas, according to the statement.

The first Rotary Club was established in 1905 by Chicago Attorney Paul Harris; by 1921, the organisation

was represented on every continent and the name Rotary International was adopted in 1922. Among the programmes which Rotary has undertaken in recent years, the largest is Polio Plus, whose goal is the eradication of polio throughout the world. To achieve that goal, Rotary is working with the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Children's Fund for polio immunisation campaigns in

polio-endemic countries, the statement said.

Rotary's community development programmes address many critical issues which include hunger and poverty alleviation, combating illiteracy and the "Preserve Planet Earth" campaign.

Australian ambassador Merry Wickes, District Governor of Rotary International Tawfiq Kassar and Glen Kinnross attended the meeting.

... and President of SOS Kinderdorf International

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor met Monday with the President of SOS Kinderdorf International Helmut Kutin at Al-Ma'wa Palace to discuss plans for the establishment of a third SOS Children's Village in Irbid, according to a Royal Court statement.

The land for the third SOS Village has been donated by the government of Jordan and the Jordan Armed Forces and

construction of the village will be funded by SOS Kinderdorf International through the Hermann Gmeiner Fund.

Mr. Kutin said that the first two houses of the village will be named after Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor in order to "motivate sponsors from abroad," the statement said.

Queen Noor, who is honorary president of the SOS Children's Village Association

of Jordan, described the SOS Villages in the Kingdom as "humanitarian and architectural models" which "reaffirm our commitment to our children."

She commended the spirit of partnership which the SOS evokes between "the government, the private sector, volunteers and particularly our partners in Europe."

The National Director of SOS Children's Villages Jor-

dan Lina Kopyt stated that "we are hoping to receive local funds to help in construction, such as that which occurred in the Agaba village, as well as in the running costs of the Amman and Agaba SOS villages."

Attending the meeting were Chairman of the SOS Board of Trustees Ali Krayem and Regional Director of SOS Lucien Rocca, the statement concluded.

'Business incubators' to assist women initiate small businesses

Zeina Durra
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Amman Business and Professional Women Club (BPWC), a prominent pioneer in the promotion of self-awareness and support for women in Jordan, is to implement a new project in June, entitled "Business Incubators."

Funded through a grant of equipment worth \$75,000, by the Japanese National Cooperation for Community Development (NICOD), the programme aims to assist women proprietors of small businesses, fostering them in their earliest, most fragile stages.

It also hopes to encourage those women interested in initiating their own small businesses by providing them with the base support and advice upon which fledgling companies might have a better chance of survival.

The "incubators" consist of a private work space area providing computer, phone, fax and photocopying facilities.

President of the BPWC in Jordan Hind Abdul Jabbar explained.

These temporary offices relieve much of the pressure with which new companies are confronted, as the facilities will be easily available and no major personal financial investment is required. In doing so the chance of success is naturally higher, she added.

"Similar projects in Italy and the Philippines reveal that small businesses have an 80-90 per cent chance of success in such an environment as both facilities and advice are available for minimum cost."

A business advisor will be present to both enable and encourage the women to seek advice regarding small business management skills such as taxation, marketing, accounting and legal problems.

The businesswomen will also benefit from the BPWC's information library.

Situated in BPWC's new headquarters, the offices are in close proximity to the library, "which provides women with

access to information on the world business scene via the Internet and other reading material," Ms. Abdul Jabbar affirmed.

Currently, the Amman centre is the only one to offer this facility.

"We want it to run smoothly," Ms. Abdul Jabbar maintained. "We've asked the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for experts to run the operation and we'll see how it materialises. We hope to gradually expand to other centres."

"We see small businesses as a means of social stability," project coordinator, Hala Ibrahim asserted. "Small businesses increase the number of jobs available, while widening the spectra of jobs on offer. The work is spread out geographically unlike, for example, a factory which hires workers on a large scale from a concentrated area," she added.

"With a small business people are able to work and employ a small number of people (from any location)."

"Small businesses are the

spirit of the age," Director of the BPWC Rasha Barghouti remarked.

Funding for businesswomen using the "incubators" will be allocated through recommended banks. BPWC intends to assist the businesswomen through introducing them to bank personnel and imparting advice concerning the best manner of obtaining a loan.

To lessen the burden and increase the likelihood of receiving the loan, BPWC will also guarantee any approved loans which the women receive in order to start their businesses. Yet, "eventually we hope to start our own credit system," Ms. Barghouti said.

Twelve "Business Incubators" will be available for rent at minimal cost, "BPWC is a non-profit organisation but we need to cover basic running costs," Ms. Abdul Jabbar stated. "Businesswomen will be able to rent offices on a flexible basis and according to their needs," she concluded.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

*"Sharpe's Battle" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.
*Tunisian film "The Bewildered" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 7:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

*"Colours" an exhibit of modern design items and home accessories from European creators, old Asfour Mansion, off Rainbow Street, until May 7.
*Works by contemporary painters from the Arab World at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until May 15.
*Works by Iraqi artist Nuri Al Rawi entitled "Departure of Innocence from the World" at Hamourabi Arts Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until May 15.
*Bani Hamida spring exhibition "Crossing Borders" (displaying rugs, cushions, runners, and wall-hangings) at the Jordan Contractors Association's Building, Deir Al Ghubar Tel. 658696, until May 18.
*Lithographs by Salim Kanaan at the Orient Gallery, Shmeisani, (Tel. 681304) until May 13.
*Exhibition of frescoes of Jordanian mosaics and Fayum portraits by Dorothy Mango at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre/Artisana, Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 647858), until May 10.
*Exhibition by the San Francisco-based Palestinian-American architectural photographer Said Hisham Nuseibeh entitled "The Farthest Mosque" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until May 8. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.

Uilla For Rent

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Consist of two Floors
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1st Floor, 3 Master Bedrooms
Ground Floor, Reception, Dining
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and Storage Rooms with children's
play yard.
Telephone, Centrally heated, Garage
and Garden.

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Tel.: 813112 between 2:30 - 6:30

COLOURS

An exhibit of modern design items and home accessories from top European creators
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Ben Affan, off Rainbow Street.
From 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. & 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. until May 7

Activists request founding of Islamic human rights group

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A group of activists submitted a request last week to the Ministry of Interior to establish an Islamic human rights organisation, a founding member told the Jordan Times Monday.

Attorney Zuhair Abu Ragheb said that the new society will mainly deal with individual and minority rights, emphasising the organisation has no political motives.

"We will not interfere with politics and our aim is to deal with human rights issues in a calm and balanced manner, without challenging or fighting anyone," Mr. Abu Ragheb stated.

Women's rights will be one of the main priorities of the Islamic organisation, according

to Mr. Abu Ragheb, who is also slated to be president of the society.

"Since women represent half of society, we believe that they deserve to be granted their full rights," he stated, adding that many women have already voiced their interest in becoming members of the society.

If established, the new organisation will be supported by its founding members and depend on donations as well, according to Mr. Abu Ragheb. He told the Jordan Times that approximately 25 people, comprised of politicians, journalists, attorneys, engineers, physicians, and Muslim activists have already signed up to be founders of the organisation.

The attorney added that the new organisation will be affiliated with the Islamic Organisation for Da'wa and Relief (IODR), "an

international organisation which supports minorities and Islamic groups worldwide."

"The IODR monitors human rights cases all over the world and defends human rights through financial and moral support, and had many activities in Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina," Mr. Abu Ragheb said.

If granted a licence, the Islamic organisation will be the third human rights organisation in Jordan, along with the Arab Human Rights Organisation and the Jordanian Society for Human Rights, which was granted a licence by the government last December.

"We have met all the legal requirements and conditions, and hopefully we will be granted a licence by the government as we have no political affiliation," Mr. Abu Ragheb concluded.

Jordan Times facsimile #696183

Britain's new government pledges 'fresh start' with EU

LONDON (R) — Britain's new Labour government pledged a "fresh start" with the European Union (EU) Monday as it moved to join the social chapter on worker rights so reviled by its Conservative predecessors.

"We want to draw a line under the fruitless, sterile confrontation of the past," Foreign Secretary Robin Cook told BBC Radio.

"We are confident that we are going to get a better deal for Britain if we work together with other European states rather than fighting them as enemies."

Mr. Cook spoke as Labour's new Europe minister, Doug Henderson, flew to Brussels to begin the process of joining the social chapter. It was to be Labour's first EU meeting since it was elected by a landslide last Thursday, signalling the high priority it places on better relations with the 15-nation bloc.

The social chapter was set up to regulate working conditions in the EU but met with fierce criticism from the previous Conservative government of John Major, which said it would cost 500,000 jobs.

Insisting Britons should enjoy the same rights as their EU counterparts, Mr. Cook said there was nothing to fear in the social chapter. Many big companies already followed its guidelines.

"We are doing it because

it is good for Britain and because we are committed to achieving a skilled, flexible work force. And the key to a competitive Britain is to make sure we have that committed work force," Mr. Cook said.

Some voices in business remain skeptical.

Adair Turner, head of the Influential Confederation of British Industry, urged Britain not to ape the "mistaken" Labour policies of some EU members and thereby damage job creation.

"It is very important we influence the climate of thinking in Europe to make sure it is not used in a mistaken fashion," he told BBC Radio. "The concern has always been... not what is in it at the moment, but where it could lead to in time if it is used in a mistaken fashion."

But Lord Howe, a former Conservative Foreign Minister and leading pro-European in his increasingly Euroskeptic party, welcomed Labour's attempt to patch up relations with Brussels.

"The fact that they intend to sign the social chapter, for better or for worse, will enable them to strike a more partnerly note when they start," he told BBC Radio. "The arrival of new people with a new tone of voice will make it easier to sell good British points, which ought to be sold well."

That is exactly Labour's

point. For the incoming government is keen to show EU Headquarters in Brussels, a friendlier face than the Conservatives, says it is easier to chalk up victories through negotiation than via confrontation.

Mr. Cook has pledged that the environment and human rights will move to the centre of Britain's often testy relations with Europe and that British embassies will play an integral role in boosting British exports, which are being squeezed by a strong pound.

Ministers, rather than civil servants, would attend all future talks on greater EU integration, though Labour, like the Conservatives, has expressed doubt about Britain joining up to the planned European single currency in the first membership wave of 1999.

Mr. Cook said Britain's veto on social security issues would be retained and that Labour wanted to ensure the protection of Britain's external border controls.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Tony Blair will have his first face-to-face talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton during an international meeting in the Netherlands on May 28, a government spokesman said Sunday.

"The two men agreed they should meet as soon as possible and this will take place at the Netherlands meeting

at the end of May," the spokesman said by telephone.

The meeting, to be held in the Hague, will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Marshall Plan which pumped billions of dollars into Western Europe after World War II to help rebuild the shattered continent.

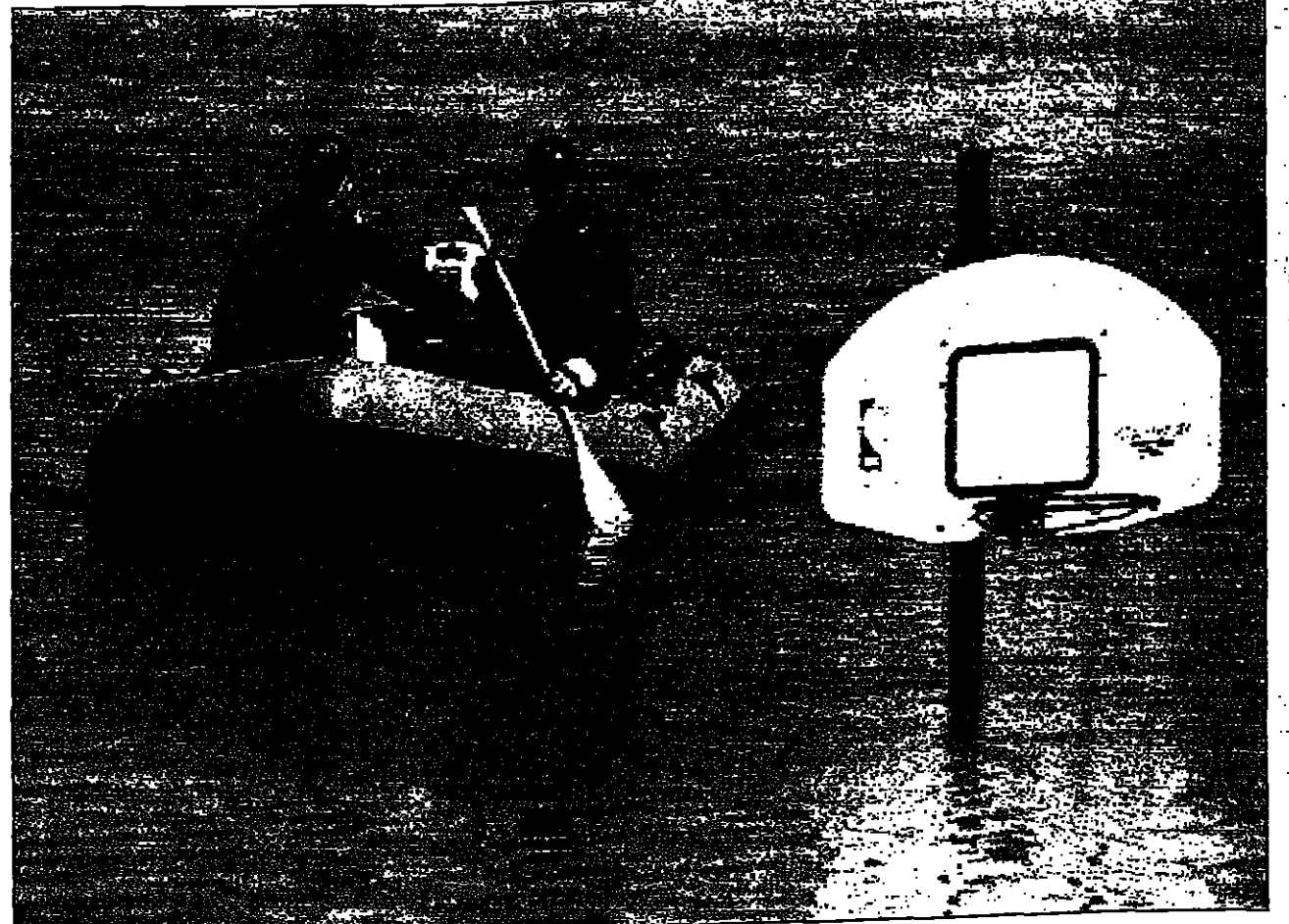
But the government spokesman could not confirm a report in the Sun newspaper which said Mr. Clinton would then fly to London for more talks with the new British prime minister.

Western diplomats said the likelihood of a Clinton-Blair meeting in London depended on whether a NATO-Russia summit went ahead as planned on May 27.

A White House spokesman said last week that the U.S. government wanted to see a continuation of the good relations between the two NATO members.

The U.S. media has sometimes portrayed Mr. Blair as a Mr. Clinton "clone," focusing on the similarities between the two. Both are relatively young politicians who sought to move their parties from the left of the political spectrum to the centre.

Some strategists from Mr. Clinton's Democratic Party discreetly advised the Labour team in the run-up to the election.



A Canadian Navy boat passes by a submerged basketball net as they deliver sandbags to Grande Pointe residents just south of Winnipeg. Most dikes and protective measures are working, keeping Winnipeg dry from the flood waters of the Red River that crested in the city on May 1 (Reuter photo)

Canada election to proceed in flood-hit Manitoba

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (R) — Flood fighters in the Canadian province of Manitoba appeared to be winning their battle Sunday as the last stretch of the swollen Red River crested without major damage to nearby communities.

About 27,400 Canadians and 50,000 Americans have been forced from their homes in recent weeks by the worst flooding in the area in 145 years. The floods devastated North Dakota, causing more than \$1 billion in damage.

After assessing the situation in Manitoba, Canada's chief electoral officer said Sunday that an upcoming national election will not be postponed in the province but special voting procedures will be implemented in hard-hit areas.

At a Winnipeg news conference, Jean-Pierre Kingsley said he toured the disaster zone and consulted with

local officials before deciding it would be feasible to hold the vote.

"I am confident Manitobans generally will be able to vote on June 2 along with other Canadians," Mr. Kingsley said.

The Red River crested north of Winnipeg Sunday around the town of Selkirk, the last stretch of the river's path before it empties into Lake Winnipeg. The water level remained near peak levels around Winnipeg where it crested Thursday at 7.5 metres above winter ice level.

Because of a huge diversion channel and miles of protective dikes, Winnipeg, the province's biggest city with 650,000 people, appears likely to emerge little damaged by flooding unless the situation worsens. Floodwaters are expected to begin receding in the city Tuesday or Wednesday.

"Permanent and tempo-

rary dikes throughout the entire Red River Valley including the city of Winnipeg will remain under extreme pressure for the next two weeks," said Larry Whitney, chief flood engineer for the province of Manitoba.

"So we are not out of the woods yet. We have to remain vigilant and flood-fighting operations will remain in full effect throughout that period."

But winds Sunday were not as brisk as feared and officials expressed confidence that a massive dike south of Winnipeg would hold despite earlier concerns.

In southern Manitoba, some residents began going back to their homes Sunday after being evacuated last week. The towns of Sanford, Brunkild and Dominion City were allowing people to return home and other towns were expected to follow suit.

Government inspectors

will fan out Monday to start assessing the damage to homes, farms and businesses from the flooding. Officials estimated Sunday that in one area southeast of Winnipeg half of properties suffered flood damage.

To make voting easier in flood-hit areas, Mr. Kingsley said polling stations would be moved and other steps taken, including the possibility of mail-in balloting, for the June 2 election for parliament.

Many Manitoba residents and opposition politicians had urged Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien to hold off calling an election during the flooding. His decision to go ahead with voting drew sharp criticism, prompting Mr. Kingsley to make an independent review of the situation.

Police halt riot in U.K. city, 2 hurt

LONDON (R) — British police battled hundreds of rioters for more than two hours overnight before restoring order in the eastern English city of Scunthorpe, the Press Association news agency reported Monday.

At least 19 people were arrested and two were taken to hospital with injuries, the agency said.

Police had to call in reinforcements from surrounding areas when they came under attack from the rioters.

"The police officers found themselves under attack from bottles, coins and similar missiles," a police spokeswoman was quoted as saying.

"In the course of the disturbance a police car was

overturned and set on fire," she added.

The Press Association said the trouble started in a fast-food shop in the city centre Sunday night and spread when revellers from a nearby nightclub joined in.

Police said the cause of the rioting was unclear and an investigation was being launched.

Bhutto wants to overcome shock and turmoil, leaves for U.S.

KARACHI (AFP) — Former Premier Benazir Bhutto left on a two-week private visit to the United States early Monday saying that she wanted some quiet time to overcome recent shock and turmoil in her life.

Ms. Bhutto, however, left Pakistan unaccompanied by her political secretary, Naheed Khan, who was prevented from boarding the flight by airport officials.

Mr. Naheed has been implicated in a corruption case, during Ms. Bhutto's three-year rule, involving recruitment at Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) in violation of regulations.

Before leaving, Ms. Bhutto said: "My life has had turmoil, shock and grief since September last."

She was referring to the murder of her estranged brother Murtaza-Bhutto.

"Since we are not in power, I think I should spend time quietly to overcome the shock," Ms. Bhutto, 44, told reporters before boarding a plane.

The former premier during her two-week stay will deliver lectures at DePaul University, Indiana, Wednesday, and also speak at special functions in Portland, Oregon and Seattle University in Washington.

She said she would also meet relatives. "For 20 years I had so much official work and now I want to take interval for unofficial work," she said.

Sources in her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) said she was also likely to meet some U.S. investors and congressmen.

Ms. Bhutto expressed concern over the law and order situation in Pakistan following recent murders in sectarian violence.

"I was told by people that there is an intention to make Pakistan a fascist state with one-party rule," she said.

She feared that "fake" cases might be initiated against her and her jailed husband Asif Ali Zardari.

Ms. Bhutto's U.S. visit is the first since the dismissal of her government by President Farooq Ahmad Leghari on charges of corruption and misuse and a crushing defeat in snap polls in February.

Taleban kill 15 rival troops, capture 20 in Kunar victory

KABUL (AFP) — The Taleban militia Monday claimed to have killed 15 opposition fighters and captured 20 others, including two key commanders, after flushing out rival factions in the eastern Afghan province of Kunar.

The Taleban forces have defeated rival factions in Kunar, the Taleban-controlled Radio Shariat said.

A Pakistan-based private news service, the Afghan Islamic Press, said Sunday the Islamic militia regained control of Asmar and Shegal districts in the turbulent Afghan province after fierce fighting in which Taleban jets also participated.

The report on the Taleban radio station confirmed the two mountainous districts had been recaptured in the operation.

"Shegal and Asmar districts of Kunar province were perfectly cleaned of the forces of evil and corruption

who were disrupting the peaceful life of the locals," the mouthpiece of the Islamic militia announced.

No independent confirmation of the Taleban gains were immediately available.

The radio station also claimed the capture of 20 opposition fighters in the area situated around 160 kilometres east of here.

"Twenty of them were taken prisoner and 15 killed, among them two commanders of evil and corruption forces, Commander Jandad and Sar Malem Sayed Jamaluddin," the report said.

"A lot of their dead have been left behind in the mountains," it added.

Kunar province has been the scene of recent fighting, and opposition forces have used mountain bases to launch attacks on the Taleban who seized the area during their victorious march to Kabul in September last year.

The attacks have been reportedly orchestrated by ousted government military boss Ahmed Shah Masood and the former governor of nearby Nangarhar province, Haji Abdul Qadeer.

Last week opposition forces claimed to have Kunar's provincial capital, Asadabad, under siege, but the recapture of Asmar and Shegal would mean Taleban forces have pushed their rivals away.

The Taleban are battling an opposition alliance that includes Masood, Qadeer, northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostam and a Shi'ite Muslim faction across the north-south divide of the snowy Hindu Kush Mountains.

Now in control of the capital and two-thirds of the country, the Muslim militia have vowed to bring a "pure Islamic state" to a country gripped by over 17 years of civil war.

Taiwanese Navy to cut 20 admirals, merge departments

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan's navy plans to cut the number of admirals by 20 and restructure part of its forces to counter military threats from rival China, a local newspaper reported Monday.

The China Times did not say how the restructuring would benefit the navy, but the military has said recent moves to trim the island's armed forces would make available funds to buy more defensive weapons and boost efficiency.

The admiral positions to be trimmed would include deputy directors of departments of navy headquarters who serve in logistic, administrative and advisory units, the China Times quoted unidentified naval sources as saying.

Officers serving in those capacities would be demoted, the paper said.

It said the structures of all seven naval combat fleets would remain unchanged, but five shipbuilding yards owned by the navy would be combined into three while four naval academies would merge into one institution.

The weapons and telecommunications units would merge into a Combat System Department and the Fleet Training Command would be abolished, the paper said.

Naval officials declined to comment on the report, but said the Defence Ministry had established a policy of trimming the island's mili-

tary while maintaining an elite fighting force.

Defence Minister Chiang Chung-Ling told parliament in March his ministry would cut the number of armed forces personnel from 453,000 to 400,000, which would enable the military to have more funds to modernise.

The Nationalist government says 400,000 troops are enough to defend Taiwan's 21 million people because the island no longer seeks to conquer the mainland.

But military experts have said Taiwan needed to buy more advanced weapons to fortify itself against China. The Nationalists lost a civil war to China's Communists in 1949 and fled to Taiwan.

Chechenya issues arrest warrant for Raduyev

MOSCOW (R) — Authorities in Russia's separatist region of Chechenya have issued an arrest warrant for radical Commander Salman Raduyev after he claimed responsibility for two bomb attacks in southern Russia.

At a TASS news agency said Monday. "Measures are being taken to find and arrest Raduyev... I think we will soon put an end to declarations which discredit the Chechen government," TASS quoted an aide to Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov as saying.

The official said the Chechen authorities did not think Commander Raduyev was behind the bomb blasts. "All that Raduyev says is the fruit of his own imagination," he said.

Commander Raduyev, a flamboyant but isolated figure who is not part of Chechenya's post-war separatist leadership, has several times vowed to attack Russian targets over Moscow's continued refusal to recognise his country's independence. Russia halted its military campaign to crush Chechenya's secessionist drive last August and is now locked in peace talks with the separatists.

Commander Raduyev said in a television interview broadcast Sunday that the explosions in Armavir and Pyatigorsk were carried out on his personal order, saying they heralded a new phase of the Russian-Chechen war.

Nearly two weeks ago a bomb killed two people in Armavir, which is near Chechenya. Two more people were killed and 20 wounded last Monday when a bomb badly damaged the railway station in the spa resort of Pyatigorsk, also near the breakaway region.

It is not clear how many armed supporters Commander Raduyev has, although Chechenya is still awash with weapons.

Russian police have detained two Chechen women suspected of organising the Pyatigorsk blast.

"Those two women have been detained because of me because I gave the order," said Commander Raduyev.

"If a single hair of their heads is harmed Russia will regret it," he said with characteristic bravado, adding that he was planning further attacks in Russia.

Some Russian and Chechen officials have questioned Commander Raduyev's sanity, though in Sunday's television interview he cheerfully dismissed suggestions that he might need psychiatric help.

Commander Raduyev, wanted by Russian police for masterminding a bloody armed raid in the Russian region of Dagestan bordering Chechenya last January, was reported killed in an ambush last year.

He later resurfaced, saying he had been seriously hurt but had undergone plastic surgery in Germany. His face was barely recognisable.

The situation around Chechenya has deteriorated badly in the past week.

Apart from the two bomb incidents, unidentified gunmen shot dead a senior official in the neighbouring region of Ingushetia and Russian police fought a brief pre-dawn skirmish with a group of what they said were 20 Chechen fighters just outside Chechenya, resulting in casualties on both sides.

Russia and Chechenya stopped fighting under a ceasefire signed last August and Russia pulled all its forces out, but peace talks are bogged down over Chechenya's political status. Chechenya wants full independence but Russia rules this out.

Mechanical failure may have caused TWA crash

WASHINGTON (R) — The FBI said Sunday that mechanical failure likely brought down TWA Flight 800 last July, killing all 230 people aboard.

"I think that the evidence as we've developed it to date... would lead the inquiry toward the conclusion that this was a catastrophic mechanical failure," said FBI Director Louis Freeh on the NBC television broadcast Meet the Press.

Mr. Freeh added, however, that neither the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) nor the National Transportation Safety Board, the lead investigating agency, had reached a formal conclusion on the mid-air explosion.

"But the evidence is certainly not moving in the direction of a terrorist attack," he said. "It is in fact moving in the other direction."

Boeing Co. denied that it has become more likely the

investigation would yield a mechanical failure verdict. "We have been looking at every possibility: from the beginning of this and all three of those theories, bomb, missile or mechanical function, are still a possibility," Boeing spokesman Doug Webb told Reuters.

"There isn't any one more likely than the other."

"(Freeh's) statement today was not an official statement, it was just something he said... nothing has really changed," Mr. Webb added.

Mr. Freeh said the FBI hoped to make its formal conclusions by "mid to late summer" in conjunction with the safety board.

The Paris-bound Boeing 747, operated by Trans World Airlines Inc., exploded shortly after takeoff from New York's Kennedy Airport on July 17, 1996.

James Kallstrom, the head of the FBI in New York, also said in two separate media interviews that two

other theories — that a bomb or a missile blew up the plane — appeared less likely.

Mr. Kallstrom made his remarks on NBC's News Forum and separately in an interview with the New York Times in its Sunday edition.

"I believe it is less likely at this point that it was a bomb or a missile or criminal act but we can't say for sure," Mr. Kallstrom said, adding that the agency hopes to come to a conclusion as to the cause of the crash in 60 to 90 days.

"We have looked at every hole, every rip, and we see no evidence of high explosive. We see no evidence of a piece of shrapnel from a missile or a warhead going through the plane," he added.

After exploding, the plane plunged into the Atlantic Ocean off of Long Island, New York.

With more than 95 per

cent of the jet recovered from the ocean, Mr. Kallstrom said that investigators have just finished the mock-up of the jet in the hanger at Calverton, Long Island, where 28 metres of the middle of the 747 has been put back together.

"We are looking at all those penetrations again for the fourth or fifth time," he said. "We are looking at them in relationship to each other. I hope that at the end of this process, 60, 90 days from now, we will be able to say definitively what it was or what it wasn't."

Mr. Kallstrom stressed the importance of the public having "faith and trust" in accepting the conclusions reached by investigators.

He said that every effort was being made "to explain every hole in the plane and light in the sky. I want to leave no stone unturned, look at every possible way we can look at it and then reach a conclusion."

Rebels will take Kinshasa if Mobutu refuses to go — Kabila

LUBUMBASHI — Rebel troops are advancing on Kinshasa and will enter the capital's suburbs in two or three days if President Mobutu Sese Seko does not hand over power first, rebel leader Laurent Kabila told journalists Monday.

"We are very close — less than 60 kilometres from the airport," Mr. Kabila told a press conference in the southern city of Lubumbashi after returning from talks with the ailing president aboard a South African Navy ship off Congo.

The rebels usually leave a corridor open for escaping government troops when they attack a town, but in the attack on the capital, Mr. Kabila said, "there will be no emergency exit door."

"Mobutu must hand over power or be chased from power. Our forces will reach the suburbs in two or three days."

Mr. Kabila said he had told Marshal Mobutu: "Resign: you have no more power; you have failed, and it's finished."

He said he had ordered his troops to halt their advance while he talked with Mr. Mobutu Sunday, when he demanded that the president hand over power immediately.

Mr. Mobutu stalled, saying that he did not want to be humiliated and needed time to talk with his family and military chiefs. Mr. Kabila said.

As a result, "the advance has already resumed. Those were my orders."

The rebel forces, said by Mr. Kabila to now number more than 70,000, have conquered three-quarters of this huge central African country since going on the offensive in the past seven months ago, with ill-disciplined government troops generally fleeing rather than fighting.

Mr. Kabila distributed a written take-it-or-leave-it offer he gave Mr. Mobutu, originally meant to come into force during the talks aboard the South African ship, but which he said remained on the table.

— A written transfer of power from Mr. Mobutu to Mr. Kabila which would signal the end of the fighting;

— guaranteed physical safety for Mr. Mobutu and his immediate family;

— a public call by Mr. Mobutu for his troops to lay down their arms and transfer their allegiance to the rebels;

— a surrender ceremony, 12 hours after the transfer of power, at Kenge, 160 kilometres east of the capital;

— the official entry of rebel troops into Kinshasa 24 hours after the transfer of power, and formation at the same time of a new government after the dissolution of the current government and parliament.

Hundreds of jubilant rebel recruits were arriving at Lubumbashi's Railway Station Thursday to take trains to the front, an AFP correspondent observed.

Among them were many government soldiers who

have switched sides, and Mr. Kabila claimed at his press conference that Mr. Mobutu was under siege by his own army.

He said he had told Mr. Mobutu he should return to his home village in northern Zaire, and that his life would be spared if he brought back from abroad everything he had stolen during his more than 31 years in power.

Mr. Kabila said he pitied Mr. Mobutu, suffering from prostate cancer, but that "there was no need for me to shake his bloody hands."

"It was clear," he said of his offer to Mr. Mobutu, "he understood."

Mr. Kabila also mused on the future, saying: "The hardest work is ahead — governing this destroyed country."

It would need a lot of assistance, he said, and a lot of planning.

The new government would not include any Mobutu supporters, he said, but opposition figures would be welcome, including Etienne Tshisekedi, considered Mr. Kabila's main rival in the opposition ranks.

U.S. envoy Bill Richardson, who helped organise the Mobutu-Kabila talks, arrived at Mr. Kabila's residence as the press conference ended.

A source close to the rebels said a French diplomat was also expected.

But in Paris, French Foreign Ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt dismissed the report as "totally unfounded."

91 died in Zaire train stampede

Meanwhile, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said Monday 91 Rwandan Hutu refugees were killed in a stampede on a train bringing refugees from the jungle of Zaire and called for such railway evacuations to be suspended.

UNHCR spokesman Paul Stromberg said three people remained in critical condition and 75 in hospitals from Sunday's disaster on the train from Biaro camp to the northeastern Zairean capital of Kisangani.

"We have asked (the rebels) for the train evacuation to be stopped immediately while we assess the situation," he added.

The initial toll was put at more than 100 dead by shocked U.N. aid officials who saw dozens of refugee bodies tumble out of six open wagons as the train reached Kisangani station.

"I think this is one of the most horrifying events I have ever seen in all my years as an aid worker," said Kilian Kleinschmidt, head of UNHCR's Kisangani operation, who was at the station.

Mr. Stromberg pressed rebel leaders for more cooperation between aid agencies and rebel officials. "We need to have control of the trains if we are to be responsible for them," he said.

The bodies of refugees crushed or suffocated fell



A Rwandan refugee woman checks the pulse of her daughter only to find her dead in Biaro camp in Kisangani. As the United Nations airlifted home the Rwandan refugees, those returning from the forest are dying from illness and starvation. The United Nations moved to expand a transit camp for Rwandan Hutu refugees in Kisangani as an airlift of tens of thousands of refugees gathered pace Sunday (Reuters photo)

from the carriages as their sides were let down to allow other refugees to get off and make their way to a ferry across the Zaire River.

Photographers on the train said they thought the Rwandans were waving and cheering as they left a stinking, disease-ridden refugee camp at Biaro, 41 kilometres south of Kisangani. But they could have been shouting for

their lives and calls from refugees for the train to stop were ignored by the driver.

The train Sunday promised the end to a pitiful three-year odyssey for thousands of Rwandans who clambered aboard the rickety open carriages on the way to a U.N. airlift home.

But just over two hours later when the train pulled into Lubunga Station in

Kisangani, the new disaster emerged.

UNHCR officials told Reuters earlier they had no control over who travelled on the rebel-operated railway which had been carrying refugees into Kisangani for the past five days.

U.N. trucks carried desperate cases out of the camps by truck. The fittest made their own way to the

railway station.

U.N. officials had complained for days that the rebels, stung by allegations had attacked the camps two weeks ago and forced refugees to flee, were dumping Rwandans in Kisangani by the unannounced trainload. Dozens of people are dying in the camps daily from illness, hunger or infected wounds.

Korean food talks end without accord, but South remains optimistic

BEIJING (AFP) — Red Cross delegates from rival North and South Korea broke off their talks Monday on direct delivery of private food aid to the starving north without agreement, but promised further negotiations.

The landmark talks between the two sides ended at 12:15 p.m. (04:15 GMT) without agreement on expanding direct delivery routes from South to North Korea, said South Korean Red Cross Secretary General Lee Byong-Woong.

"We did not get any single concrete agreement... but both sides exchanged views in a good atmosphere and promised to meet again to discuss the issues," Mr. Lee said.

"The next meeting will be arranged through the direct South-North telephone lines in Panmunjom (in the demilitarised zone dividing North and South Korea)," he added.

Talks reached an impasse when the South called for an expansion of direct transport links but the north insisted on first knowing how much aid would be provided and on what scale.

"Regrettably, the talks could not continue because the South Korean side did not specify the size or dates

of shipments," North Korean chief delegate Paek Yong-Ho said.

"We cannot say we are disappointed or satisfied... but we did not enter into the substance of the matter," he added.

South Korea's Red Cross, which has 3.5 billion won (\$3.8 million) in donations to buy food for the north, said it could not estimate the scale until it had an agreement on direct transport and on monitoring the aid.

"As our Korean Red Cross is mobilising private grain donations, it cannot say how much grain it will have and when," said Mr. Chang Moon-ik, press attaché at the South Korean embassy.

"This depends on what agreements are made on delivery," he added.

But Ole Gronning, Pyongyang representative for the International Federation of Red Cross Societies (IFRC), discounted the impasse and said it was not surprising given that the two sides had not met in five years.

"We are very optimistic after this meeting. The atmosphere was very friendly and the delegations are preparing for another meeting very soon," he said.

The two sides first met in

Beijing Saturday to discuss delivery of emergency aid and then postponed their discussions until Monday.

The main thrust of the talks was to persuade Pyongyang to allow private food donations from South Korea to be transported through the demilitarised zone dividing the two Koreas, which would save both time and money.

"There is an expectation in South Korea that there will be a large increase in donations to North Korea and the North Koreans obviously want to manage this," said Johan Schaer, head of the regional delegation of the international "We have been struggling hard to get people to understand that this is an emergency and now there is a great deal of concern in South Korea," he added.

Although food aid from the South Korean government was not on the agenda, officials in Seoul expressed hope that the meeting would help thaw North-South relations.

The Red Cross reported earlier this week that grain supplies had run out around mid-March in the North Korean countryside, where many farmers are now surviving entirely on grass and bark.

India hopes for warmer ties with Pakistan

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral said he hopes a face-to-face meeting with his Pakistani counterpart next week will lead to warmer relations between the longtime enemies.

"We will try to find a way out of the deadlock in Indo-Pakistan relations and I hope we will find a way to improve relations to our mutual benefit," United News of India (UNI) quoted Mr. Gujral as saying late Sunday.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted India's new prime minister as telling dignitaries in the northern state of Punjab that he expected a positive result from the meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif May 12.

Mr. Gujral and Mr. Sharif are to hold talks ahead of a three-day summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in the capital of the Maldives, Male.

The meeting would follow two rounds of high-level talks which resumed in March after three years of bitterness between the South Asian neighbours.

It would be the first meeting between the prime ministers of the two countries since April 1993, when Mr. Sharif and then Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao met on the sidelines of a SAARC conference. Mr. Gujral told the audience in Punjab that as foreign minister under former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, he had instructed Indian officials to refrain from making critical statements towards Pakistan.

Last month before being named Prime Minister, Mr. Gujral held upbeat talks in New Delhi with Pakistani Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan. As a goodwill gesture, they agreed to free several hundred fishermen detained for illegally fishing in each other's

waters. During his one-day visit to Punjab, Mr. Gujral said India wanted Pakistan to thrive and was willing to increase trade.

"Let Pakistan be prosperous as a prosperous Pakistan will be to India's benefit," UNI quoted him as saying.

Mr. Gujral said in a bid to build mutual trust he had allowed the export of 14,000 tonnes of Indian sugar to Pakistan by rail.

Some leaders in Punjab, which borders Pakistan, have called for the opening up of the border to permit free trade between the two neighbours, which have fought three wars since 1947.

Mr. Gujral said India exports some 20 billion rupees (\$560 million) worth of goods every year to Pakistan via Dubai and Hong Kong, and New Delhi would continue to press the SAARC to convert south Asia into a free trade zone.

NATO, Russia meet again to formalise relationship

BRUSSELS (AFP) — NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov met again Tuesday to try to finalise an accord which Russian President Boris Yeltsin wants to sign in three weeks.

Eighty per cent of the accord defining post-Cold War relations between Moscow and the alliance, against a background of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) plans to expand up to Russia's borders, has already been agreed.

This includes the definition of a new consultative mechanism with the establishment of a permanent NATO-Russian liaison committee based in Brussels.

Tuesday's talks in Luxembourg, the fifth encounter between Mr. Solana and Mr. Primakov, will try to resolve some key outstanding differences on political and military relationships.

Up until only a few days ago the two sides were still far apart, while Mr. Yeltsin has already said he intends to sign the accord with NATO leaders in Paris on May 27.

NATO had proposed writing into the treaty a unilateral declaration that it has neither the need nor the desire to base nuclear weapons or troops in the Eastern European countries which will soon be invited to join the alliance.

Russia, on the other hand, demanded an undertaking by NATO that it would "never" make such deployments or install other military infrastructure. It also wanted NATO to be considered as "a bloc" in terms of the up-dating of the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty (CFE) currently under negotiation.

NATO considers such concessions to be impossible without making the newcomers second-rank members of the alliance.

However at the end of last week a visit by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright enabled "progress" to be made in the negotiations, both the Russians and Americans said.

French campaign launched with poll gap narrowing

PARIS (AFP) — France's election campaign officially got underway Monday with the left narrowing the poll gap on Premier Alain Juppé's ruling centre-right bloc, in ballots which could determine France's future in Europe.

Three weeks ahead of the first round of voting on May 25, the deadline for candidates to declare themselves passed at midnight Sunday, launching a poll race seen as a huge political gamble by President Jacques Chirac.

A new poll published Monday put the predicted majority of the Ruling Rally for the Republic (RPR) and Union for French Democracy (UDF) down to 29 seats. It held 80 per cent of the outgoing 577-seat National Assembly.

That came after another poll Sunday put the predicted majority down to 14 seats. Most polls over the last two weeks have predicted a majority of between 40-100 seats.

Mr. Chirac is expected to

intervene personally this week to boost his embattled premier's chances of reelection in the two-round legislative ballots set for May 25 and June 1.

Some have seen his direct appeal — thought to be scheduled for Wednesday, the second anniversary of Mr. Chirac's own election — as a sign of nerves as opinion polls indicate victory is far from sure.

Mr. Chirac "feels obliged to intervene," said Communist Party leader Robert Hue, who has forged an electoral pact with Socialist Party (PS) leader Lionel Jospin in a bid to overturn the French left's routing in 1993 ballots.

"He is going to commit himself to defend the outgoing majority. He will have to commit himself more," he added.

The French poll race was launched on April 21 when Mr. Chirac dissolved parliament and announced early ballots saying he needed a new mandate to continue reforms needed to take

France farther into Europe.

For the last two weeks it has largely overshadowed by the elections across the channel in Britain. But Labour leader Tony Blair's success has left the field open for the French ballot race to get underway in earnest.

Socialist leader Jospin, who has forged links with Communists and Greens, has made the fight against joblessness the central plank of his campaign.

The Party Manifesto unveiled Friday notably pledged to create 700,000 jobs for the young and introduce a 35-hour work week without loss of pay in place of the current 39 hours.

But Mr. Juppé again lashed out at the Manifesto Sunday — and in particular accused Jospin of "electoralism" over Europe by saying he would set new conditions for France's participation in a single European currency.

"Lionel Jospin has just made a quite clear change in direction, an electrifying

change in direction which would lead France to turn its back on Europe," he said in a newspaper interview.

Since the landslide victory by Labour Party leader both the French left and right have sought to interpret the British result for their own ends.

Mr. Juppé did so again Sunday, denying that the British left's success could be repeated in France.

"The British Labour Party won because they had the courage to change," he said. "The French left has not changed. They have learnt no lessons from history."

The latest polls will make Mr. Chirac's planned intervention this week all the more crucial.

"There are as many risks in this intervention as there were when he announced the dissolution," said Communist Party leader Hue. Perhaps most worrying, both the latest polls indicated that some 35 percent of voters have not yet decided which way they will cast their ballots.

Bonn confident of greenhouse gas compromise

CANBERRA (R) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl said Monday he was confident world governments could thrash out a compromise deal on controversial targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Kohl discussed Europe's campaign for binding global targets to cut emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases during a 90-minute meeting with Australian leader John Howard.

The Australian prime minister, complaining compulsory targets would damage Australian industry, sought Mr. Kohl's support ahead of a key summit in Japan later this year.

Australia, a major energy exporter, is fighting U.S. and European Union efforts

to impose compulsory across-the-board targets, with Canberra instead arguing for goals tailored to suit individual countries — a process known as differentiation.

Mr. Kohl pledged to personally argue against Australia being put on trial over the issue, stressing both countries were committed to broad goal of environmental protection.

But he stopped short of backing the Australian position. "I do think that we stand a very good chance of coming to a sensible kind of solution," he said at a joint news conference.

The European Union and the United States are pushing for parties to the United Nations climate change

convention to adopt binding targets to cut greenhouse emissions to 15 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020.

Australia has privately raised the possibility of quitting the convention if unacceptable targets are imposed at a meeting of convention nations in Kyoto, Japan in December.

"Unless differentiation is allowed for Australia, we will be very seriously disadvantaged by what we perceive to be the possible outcome of the attitude of both the United States and European Union," Mr. Howard said.

"I'm not going to speculate as to what Australia might do."

"I should, however, emphasise again that this is very much a question of

vital Australian national interests being at stake."

After talks covering a range of bilateral and global issues, including greenhouse, the two leaders pledged to strengthen political, cultural and economic ties in what they said was an already strong relationship despite the geographic distance.

Mr. Kohl also endorsed Australia's push to become a member of the Asia-Europe meeting, a key forum linking Asia and Europe.

"I would be very, very much in agreement and I would be very pleased indeed if my colleague (Mr. Howard) were to sit opposite me at this meeting," he said.

Bosnian Serb homes destroyed in Croat-held town

SARAJEVO (R) — Twenty-five homes formerly inhabited by Bosnian Serbs were put to the torch in Croat-controlled territory over the weekend in an apparent attempt to discourage refugees from moving back, an international official said Sunday.

The homes were torched in Drvar in western Bosnia only hours after Croat authorities had agreed with a mediator to allow Serb refugees to return to the town in small numbers, said Simon Haselock, a spokes-

man for Office of the International High Representative to Bosnia.

Christian Schwarz-Schilling, international mediator for Bosnia's Muslim-Croat Federation, met the mayor of Drvar Saturday and won pledges that Serb refugees would be permitted to return on a "case by case basis," Mr. Haselock said.

That same night, Mr. Haselock told Reuters, 25 houses were damaged by fire.

Initial reports indicated an additional 25 homes had

been dismantled and prepared for destruction, he said.

A human rights monitor who asked not to be named said the destruction looked well-organised, with roofs dismantled before the homes were put to the torch.

Bosnian Croat authorities have so far refused to allow Serb refugees to move back to Drvar, which had an overwhelming Serb majority before it fell to advancing Croat troops at the end of the 1992-95 war.

Mr. Haselock said the

incident dealt a setback to efforts to resettle refugees in the area.

"One can't help but marvel at the clear contradiction between an agreement by the authorities to accept returnees and the destruction of houses which belong to the very people who wish to return," he said.

Nationalist authorities across Bosnia, seeking to build ethnically "pure" towns, have prevented the return of refugees from rival ethnic communities since the war ended 18 months ago.

Jordan Times

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Timely decision

THE TASK of turning Aqaba into a free trade zone that would also cater for potential investors in industry and tourism is an awesome one. Not only will it require a great deal of preparations and planning, it will need huge investment. But once that mission is accomplished, the benefits that Jordan will reap will be enormous. The experience of Jabal Abu Ali in Dubai, to use only one example, is testimony to what free trade sea-side cities can contribute to a country's economy.

Situated at the meeting point of Asia and Africa, Aqaba can serve as a tourist point to goods and services destined for Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Israel and even to Syria. It will link the ports of Asia to the whole of the Middle East and Europe.

The potential is great.

Free from the central government's bureaucracy and red tape, and exempt of customs, taxes and fees, Aqaba can attract not only new businesses and industries, but tourists who will flock to the city to enjoy its sun, beaches and entertainment facilities. All these new activities will create new jobs, not only with the trade zone itself but also inland from where all these activities will be run and from where they will draw manpower and other support services.

The government of course understands all the constraints that such a decision will impose on the city and its environs. Accommodating trade, industry and tourism, catering for a sophisticated urban population, including university students, and protecting the region's ecology and environment is a very delicate task. Aqaba will only be a free trade zone, but also an airport, a seaport, a resort area, and a transit point for people on goods. Therefore, studying and benefiting from the experience of other countries that preceded us in creating their own free zones is a desirable exercise.

The question of whether to turn Aqaba into a free trade zone has been with us for so many years. Now that the decision has been made, what we need is to go-ahead full speed with implementing it. Any delay in putting the decision into full motion will only delay the realisation of the dream of a prosperous city that will benefit all Jordanians.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Aswaq daily echoed a call by the ministers of agriculture and labour on farmers and breeders of cattle and other livestock to replace non-Jordanian veterinarians with Jordanians in a bid to help address the unemployment problem and to ensure far more advanced veterinary services, which are vital for the economy. More than 60 per cent of the investment in the agricultural sector has been made in the livestock sector, but little has been done by the farm owners so far to employ modern veterinary techniques to increase output or to employ local veterinarians with more modern facilities to guarantee better results, said Ahmad Dabbas. The writer said that the guest animal doctors, mostly Iraqis and Egyptians, are employed as farm workers and are asked to do extra work for less pay. At the same time, farm owners still employ obsolete or primitive methods in handling their business, depending on the guest workers to carry out the work, according to the writer. He said that by adopting modern techniques rather than the traditional methods, the farm owners can reap abundant profits, and by employing Jordanian veterinarians, they will be helping the country to deal with the unemployment problem and contribute most positively to strengthening the national economy.

A WRITER for the weekly Al Bilad Monday expressed support for the opposition political groups, mainly the Islamists, who claim that the coming general elections will not be fair and free, and called on the opposition parties to boycott these elections. Ziyad Abu Ghanimeh said one can only remember the public protests which followed the 1993 general elections, after it appeared that results were rigged in some areas, noting that those elections were held when Dr. Majali was prime minister and had promised Jordanians free and fair elections. The Islamists have all the right to express their suspicions that the coming elections will be held in a free atmosphere and in all fairness and that the results will be duly respected, said the writer. But he said that since the Islamists and the other opposition parties declare in advance that the elections will not be free and fair, they ought to announce that they are boycotting them rather than following a practice they adopted during the 1993 elections when they claimed that the elections would not be free and fair and yet rushed to the ballot boxes. The writer said these groups should take a decision now and boycott the coming elections.

The View from Fourth Circle

Election monitoring and Jordan watching, from May to November

By Rami G. Khouri

KEEP YOUR eye on the current election monitoring dispute in Jordan, for it may provide an important signal about the quality and direction of Jordanian political life. The government and the Islamist-led opposition have been locked in low-intensity disagreement about the need for international or domestic monitors for the November parliamentary elections. The prime minister addressed and swiftly dismissed the issue at a press conference last month, saying that the state will not organise monitoring but that "everybody is welcome to come and watch" the elections; and the interior minister this week again rejected the idea, saying the government could not accept observers for this would be "shameful" for Jordan, given our credible track record in holding elections.

The important issue of election monitoring is not only a technical question of the free and fair nature of the November elections; it cuts to the heart of several political and national dynamics, including the quality of government and the credibility and efficacy of political life in Jordan, and thus it deserves much more serious and open debate than it has received to date.

The people, government and state of Jordan should be proud of their recent electoral legacy within the wider, tortured landscape of Arab democratic and electoral history, as this year we hold our third consecutive, generally certifiably free and fair parliamentary elections since 1989. Yet, there remains much real scepticism in the land about the true value of a democratic system in which the government appears perpetually able to depend on a parliamentary majority that allows it to pursue its policies virtually unfettered by meaningful opposition. This is a valid if uncomfortable matter that we and others in the democratising Third World have to address more honestly, and less emotionally. It raises the fundamental question of whether our democratising metamorphosis is mainly about form, or also about substance. It also raises dramatic questions about the functioning of democratic institutions in moral and cultural landscapes defined by structural majorities.

The opposition in Jordan is numerically small and strategically weak — this is partly because of its own shortcomings, but mainly because of the democratisationally confounding reality that the majority of Jordanians broadly agrees with the government's policies, especially as these policies are outlined and formulated by royal leadership. This broad, tribal-, interest-, and culture-based automatic majority support for the government in Parliament means that the true test of Jordan's democratic change, and of our overall political credibility and vitality, will have to take place outside Parliament. Parliament itself is not a sufficient measure to democracy or of democratisation. Thus, the election monitoring question becomes so important, and so much bigger than the technical issue of checking on boxes and ballot papers. What is being monitored is not only Jordan's elections, but also Jordan itself as a political culture.

The opposition is asking for election monitors for two reasons: *logistically and narrowly*, it has legitimate grievances about some aspects of the conduct of previous elections that should be addressed; *politically and broadly*, it is seeking means of engaging the government in a political contest that it has not been able to achieve through routine parliamentary life, where the government's majority is both quantitatively impressive and chronologically hereditary.

The specific concerns of the opposition resulting from the 1989 and 1993 elections need to be addressed and resolved. We have heard many complaints, some of which may be true and others probably not valid. Even if those elections had been personally monitored by the Azhar Mosque, Pope Paul II, the Arab Human Rights Organisation, and Jimmy Carter's entire close family and all his cousins, we still would have heard complaints from the opposition — and rightly so, because this is both the role and the responsibility of an opposition in a democratic system. They oppose. They challenge. They needle. They heckle. They keep the government on its toes. They maintain the process of democratic engagement, which is what this is all about.

"The opposition is asking for election monitors for two reasons: logistically and narrowly, it has legitimate grievances about some aspects of the conduct of previous elections that should be addressed; politically and broadly, it is seeking means of engaging the government in a political contest that it has not been able to achieve through routine parliamentary life, where the government's majority is both quantitatively impressive and chronologically hereditary."

The government of Abdul Salam Majali — experienced, self-confident, smart young technocrats and savvy politicians — should think through the question of election monitors with more political realism, historical opportunities and intellectual rationality, and less Semitic/Arab cultural baggage, Jordanian particularism or personal emotionalism. The previous Kabarti government went through the motions of democratic engagement with the opposition in Parliament and outside it, but in the end the motions it made were not enough, and the government changed for several reasons that included its public perception as being arrogant and autocratic (despite its repeated, if mechanical, interaction with the opposition).

This government may now face a challenge, with the election monitors issue, similar to that the Kabarti government faced with the bread price issue: the opposition is making reasonable political demands that will not have any significant impact on the flow of economic or political power in Jordan for decades to come; so why not engage them in a political give-and-take, meet them half way, forge a compromise that satisfies both sides, and in the process strike a blow for genuine democratic dialogue, consensus building, national unity, Jordanian values, Arab-Islamic humanism, pluralistic vibrancy, political modernity, and all the other principles, traditions and goals that Jordan should embody as a small state that can

only hope to make its mark in the world of nations through the values it manifests and by setting such examples of honourable, pragmatic and dignified statehood? Indeed, why not?

If the government believes that elections are free and fair and are not distorted by deliberate government tampering — as I do — then it should welcome rather than fear election monitoring. Pride alone is not a good enough reason to reject election monitoring. If human rights and judicial procedures in the U.S. and Great Britain are monitored by third parties, then it should be reasonable for similar monitoring to take place in an open, free and honest country like Jordan. Monitoring our elections is a positive step that cannot hurt the country, and can only help Jordan in the eyes of its own people and the rest of the world.

Monitoring can heighten political credibility, strengthen democratic validity and promote economic confidence among domestic, regional and international investors. If the state sees inviting monitors to be against our sense of honour — which is the state's right in a young democracy — the opposition must respect this political/emotional sentiment and find a way to accommodate it while also getting around it. At the same time, the state must also respect the political/emotional sentiments being expressed by the opposition. A compromise is out there begging to be made and activated.

I suggest that the state and the opposition should reformulate the question in a more pragmatic and less emotional manner that allows Jordan to achieve maximum benefits from the November elections and allows both the government and the opposition to achieve political gains and build up their respective reservoirs of honour and relevance.

The opposition and the mainstream political establishment should take up the prime minister's suggestion that we "invite people to come and watch" us in November. Specifically, the country and people of Jordan should consider establishing a novel election monitoring system that is based primarily on domestic, non-governmental institutions that devise a monitoring mechanism which includes invited Arab and international observers along with official Jordanian government representatives. We do not have to call this monitoring. We can call it watching. Watch the elections. And watch Jordan.

Watch Jordan between now and the elections, to see if it moves forward towards more pragmatic, modern, responsive, dynamic and fun governance and political life, or stalls and ultimately perhaps even stagnates at a level of real but rudimentary democratic transformation where form is more important than substance, and where meetings of people are deemed more important than meetings of minds.

We failed the test of democratic politics last year when our political system could not agree on a compromise policy on the bread subsidies issue. Let's hope we learn from our experience, and that we do not fail again this year over the issue of the fairness of our elections in November. Some important watching will take place in November, but perhaps more important will be the watching that will take place between now and the elections, as we monitor the vital signs and growing pains of our own political system.

Jerusalem under Israeli rule — and it keeps on changing

By Michael Adams

FOR MORE than a month now, Israeli bulldozers have been at work on Mount Scopus, clearing the ground for a housing development on the open hillside overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem. In expropriating 800 acres of land here, in the face of bitter protests from the entire Arab community, the Israelis have embarked on their most far-reaching defiance of the United Nations, which last year called on them to desist from any action which would alter the status of the Arab city of Jerusalem.

It is odd, but not inappropriate, that the bulldozer should have become the symbol of Israel's mastery of the Holy City. Before going to war in 1967, Israel assured the world through the prime minister, Levi Eshkol, that it had no designs on "even one foot" of Arab land. Before the end of June last year, the bulldozers were at work in the Old City and they had made nearly 4,000 Arabs homeless. (The Geneva Convention of 1949 states that "any destruction by the occupying power of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons or to the state... is prohibited, except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations.")

It is not only the Arabs who are alarmed by the plan to build apartment blocks on Mount Scopus, between the Mount of Olives and the suburb of Shufat. Reporting a press conference on the subject, the Jerusalem Post quoted one Israeli citizen as saying: "My thoughts keep reverting to the nightmare

of Mount Scopus and the other hills of East Jerusalem being covered with shikunim like the heights of Ain Karem." (Shikunim are the concrete tenement buildings which disfigure the western skyline of Israel Jerusalem.)

Lately there have been encouraging signs that even prominent Israelis are realising the short-sightedness of trying to bulldoze the Arabs into submission, treating them as human obstacles to the achievement of a selfish dream. A month ago, Teddy Kollek, the ebullient Israeli mayor of Jerusalem, defended to me his government's policies over Jerusalem (including the Mount Scopus expropriation) as being necessary to the development of the city in the interests of all its citizens. Since then he has been quoted by the Jewish Chronicle as denouncing "the complete failure of the government administration", which he blamed on "a complete lack of consideration towards the way of life and the culture of East (that is, Arab) Jerusalem."

Certainly this lack of consideration, to give it a polite name, is the overriding impression of the visitor who knew the Old City before the Israeli occupation. There are, first of all, the trivialities. Was it really necessary, or tactful, when the population of East Jerusalem was exclusively Arab, to take down the Arabic signs at every bus stop and substitute for them signs in Hebrew? If taxes for the Arab citizens have to be increased to match the much higher Israeli level of taxation, would it not be more efficient, as well as more courteous, to present the demands for payment in

Arabic instead of in Hebrew — which scarcely any Arab can read, let alone understand? Mayor Kollek remarked that the Arab population of Jerusalem "would not accept the hard and sometimes offensive official Israeli attitude," and I saw very well what he meant when I called on an old friend, the wife of a former foreign minister of Jordan. Her husband, after a lifetime of public service, had just been banished from his home in Jerusalem because he refused to renounce his loyalty to King Hussein. She herself, lonely and anxious not to put a foot wrong with the Israeli authorities and risk losing her home as well as her husband, asked me to get translated for her some formal document which had just dropped through her letter-box — printed, of course, in Hebrew. It turned out to be nothing more alarming than the telephone bill; but in her particular circumstances it does not take a lot of imagination to understand the distress it caused her before we could get it deciphered.

Bus signs and telephone bills are of course only the insignificant reminders of a domination that is relentless and all-pervading. An Arab inhabitant of Jerusalem, whose ancestors may have lived here for 1,000 years before any of the present rulers of Israel set foot in Palestine, is now made aware at every turn of the presence of an alien authority which has power to raise his taxes, to expropriate his land, to bulldoze his house out of existence, to arrest him, to expel him — all this while denying him recourse of any kind to any authority which can lift a finger to help him.

Such an Arab has no longer even any clearly established nationality. He must carry an identity card which expressly states that "this certificate does not establish the right to enter Israel." He has no Israeli passport, yet if he uses his Jordanian passport to travel to any other country he cannot return to Jerusalem. He is not represented in the municipal council which has assumed control of the city's affairs nor in the parliament of the country which now seeks to claim his allegiance.

Mayor Kollek again has put his finger on the weakness of Israel's approach to the Arabs, in criticising those of his compatriots who are "trying to induce Arabs to leave the city or to make them second-class citizens." For in Jerusalem, more acutely than anywhere else, Israelis are faced with the fundamental contradiction between their two national ambitions: to expand the state of Israel, and to maintain that state as an exclusively Jewish entity. The contradiction puts the Arabs of Jerusalem, as well as the Israelis, in an impossible position. As one Arab put it to me, with a wry smile: "You British used to say 'if you can't beat them, join them' — but, you know, you can't join the Jews."

What you certainly cannot do with any hope of success is try to build peace on a foundation of injustice; and injustice is rife in Jerusalem these days. Malcolm Muggeridge, in a recent article, wrote of feeling "abnormally horrified to see in Jerusalem two Arabs, one of them a youth, being arrested beaten up, and then, with black bags over their heads, driven away at top speed in a

jeep." He would be still more horrified if he could meet those two Arabs again later and hear the rest of the story, and learn that this kind of thing is going on all the time and for no particular reason — except to persuade the victims and anyone who knows what has happened to them that safety lies on the far side of the River Jordan, in a refugee camp. There are some Israelis — I like to think they are a minority, but I'm not sure — who believe that if enough Arabs could learn that lesson, Israel's problems would be solved. They do not always get their way, but they have got it often enough since last June to do their own country a possibly irreparable injury.

It is sad to report that the Christian communities in Jerusalem come badly out of all this. Arabs are critical of the failure of Christendom to take a firm stand over the fate of Jerusalem. Christian Arabs, who constitute about 10 per cent of the population of Jordan, feel acutely the lack of support from the Christian World. "The witness of the church is much weakened," one Arab pastor told me. Christian and Muslim alike ask in wonderment how the Western representatives of the churches in Jerusalem can remain silent in a situation which they are better placed to assess than most of us.

Is there then no solution, no way of escape from the impasse into which Israel's defiance of the United Nations has plunged Jerusalem? Israelis will tell you that no government in Israel could give up Jerusalem and survive. I doubt if this is true, for Israelis are above all realists.

tic and would accept a fairer solution if anyone were in a position to force one on them. What is unquestionably true is that no Arab government could under any circumstances renounce Jerusalem as part of any remotely conceivable settlement; nor is there any power in the world which could force the Arabs to do so.

If one accepts this fundamental reality, the possibilities become clearer. It becomes plain that if Israel insists on retaining physical control of the Old City of Jerusalem, then peace in the Middle East is well out of anyone's reach. If that suits the Israelis, as many Arabs are coming to believe, then they may be well advised to stay in Jerusalem, though they must be prepared indefinitely to hold the city down by methods which many of them already find distasteful and which the world is bound to regard as doubly reprehensible in the context of the Holy City.

Yet there is an alternative which the Israelis might be wise to consider before it is altogether too late. This is not withdrawal, which would divide the city once again; not internationalisation, which has little appeal for either side; but a condominium, which could be the starting-point for a wider experiment in coexistence and which could preserve the unity of the city, but with no victors and no vanquished, no masters and no second-class citizens, no angry clash of eager but ill-considered ambitions. And that, in Human Rights Year, might indeed be the New Jerusalem.

Middle East International

Scandal taints Cherokee legend

By Tony Allen-Mills

TAHLEQUAH, Oklahoma

At the end of the redskin Calvary known as the Trail of Tears, the Comanche war scouts were pounding their drums. Around them the pride of a dozen Indian peoples shuffled, stomped and howled. The Kiowas danced with the Arapahos. There were Osage, Tonkawa and Cheyenne. All seemed well beginning of April as the Cherokee nation hosted its annual inter-tribal pow-wow.

Yet across the green hills of eastern Oklahoma trouble is stirring for America's second largest Indian tribe.

A century and a half after the Cherokees were removed at gunpoint from their ancestral lands in the east and were herded across the Mississippi on a trail that became synonymous with deprivation and death, another crisis looms. This one, however, is self-inflicted.

Just as the Cherokees were hoping to attract America's attention to new commemorations of the Trail of Tears — as the route of their forced migra-

tion has become known — the tribe is sinking instead into a swamp of allegations of corruption and abuse of power.

For almost two months the tribe has been paralysed by a ferocious feud between Joe Byrd, the principal chief, and the Cherokees' independent court system, which has been attempting to investigate some of the tribe's financial dealings.

In March Byrd summarily fired 14 of the tribe's 15 marshals, who are responsible for law and order on Indian-owned land. The marshals had previously searched Byrd's offices for documents relating to a legal settlement in which almost \$1 million of tribal funds was paid to a law firm headed by Byrd's brother-in-law.

"The chief is trying to save his own ass," David Cornsilk, publisher of a Cherokee monthly newspaper, claimed. "Even if it means destroying our sovereignty." Byrd has insisted that no Cherokee money had been misused.

The ensuing mayhem has split the tribe, and the FBI

is attempting to investigate without infringing the Cherokees' federal rights to control their own affairs. Byrd's formidable predecessor as chief, Wilma Mankiller, has denounced his handling of the affair as "utter nonsense." The tribe's chief justice, Ralph Keen, blamed Byrd for provoking a "constitutional crisis."

While vicious infighting is scarcely a novelty, the dispute has come at an awkward time. A backlash is growing among right-wing Republicans at what some Americans see as excessive political correctness in the government's Indian policy.

The emergence of tribes who have become fabulously wealthy from casino profits has heightened the grumbling about federal programmes benefiting Indians. Reports of corruption in welfare programmes for poorer tribes have prompted Republicans to urge that Indians should be treated the same as other low-income groups.

"Certain business people and organisations are not

happy that tribes have been able to make profitable business ventures," said Bill Anoatubby, governor of the Chickasaw nation which, with the Cherokees, was among the five so-called "civilised" tribes who were forced along the Trail of Tears.

"It is important that we stand up and be counted," he told a symposium in Tahlequah last week. "Jealousy and greed must not be the grounding factors in the development of Indian policy. The Indian people cannot afford another Trail of Tears."

The Cherokees' troubles are a far cry from their glory days as native America's "principal people." The 17th-century colonists who first encountered them wrote of hospitable but aloof tribesmen who occupied vast swathes of what is now North Carolina and Georgia.

In 1730, a Cherokee delegation was brought to London "to enter into Articles of Friendship and Commerce with His Majesty." One chief, Ostenaco, was presented to King George III and Sir Joshua Reynolds

painted his portrait. A century later, the remorseless thrust of white commercial expansion spelt the end of the Cherokee empire. In 1836, a fraudulent treaty gave the Cherokees two years to join other transplanted tribes west of the Mississippi. In 1838, President Andrew Jackson sent in his militia to round up 14,000 of the tribe. They were thrown into stockades at bayonet point.

In one of the most disgraceful episodes of the Indian era, more than a third of the tribe died on the forced march west. "It is hard to think about the atrocities of that time," said Anoatubby. "The cholera, the disease-ridden blankets, the provisions not fit to eat, much of it supplied by the government. Congress acted without remorse in the forced removal of entire nations of people. It was a time that all Americans should be ashamed of."

Many of the tribes who lost ancestors on that trek are now attempting to track grave sites and to commemorate milestones in Tennessee, Alabama, Mis-

issippi and Arkansas. Byrd and Anoatubby were joined last week by Perry Beaver, chief of the Muscogee Creek tribe, and Jerry Haney, chief of the Florida Seminoles.

Later this year the tribes will meet on the tiny Cherokee reservation in North Carolina, all that remains of the fencible empire that was once their home, to coordinate memorial activities across the southeast, so that Americans are provided with a permanent reminder of a homegrown horror.

Yet the real challenge for the Cherokees is to halt the destructive infighting that plays into the hands of Americans who believe the tribal system to be venal and corrupt. Cornsilk believes Byrd will be forced to stand down.

But he also believes the crisis may turn out for the good. "It has shown that our court system is truly independent and the mechanisms are in place for governing ourselves," he said. "Our tribal government is coming of age."

The Sunday Times

Randa Habib's corner

'Bright' side, bleak days

— Hi, how are you?
— I really don't know.
— What do you mean by that?
— I feel completely lost.
— Don't we all! But look at the bright side. Such a feeling makes you want to travel, to be somewhere else, without having to move.
— Maybe, but I need a clear head in order to cope with the day-to-day life and meet all my commitments.
— Tell me what is bothering you.
— First, I realised this morning that my telephone line is not working. Puzzled by this sudden cut-off, I checked with the telephone company to learn that it had been cut off as "reprise" for "failing to cover the bill of March."
— Did you fail to pay for that month?
— No, I did not, for a simple reason: I never received the bill in the first place. And when I asked for the bill in question in order to settle it, I was simply told: "The bills of March are not ready yet, you will get it soon by mail."
— Well, these things happen, probably around here more than elsewhere, but it should not make you depressed.
— True, but the problem is that the water has been cut off too. I got a bill for 214 dinars, and I knew for a fact that the bill was inaccurate. How on earth could I have used, in my tiny apartment, so much water? It is not as if I had a swimming pool...
— Did you complain?
— Yes. But I was told to pay first and to file a complaint later. As I did not have the money, I have to do without water for a while.
— Talking of your apartment, are you still indebted to the bank?
— More than ever. The interest on the loan has increased, and some say that there will be another rise before the end of the year, so I calculated that probably my children will continue paying the instalments long after I am gone.
— Now, try to be positive. At least you are healthy.
— I do not know about that either. I felt a sharp pain in my chest the other day. One specialist told me that I needed to have an operation; another one advised absolutely against it and gave me some medication; a third one told me it is just nerves and I should relax and take it easy.

Jordan Times,

Tel. 699634, 684311



In the 18th century a Cherokee delegation visited London and met King George III, but today the tribe faces allegations of corruption and the hostility of right-wing Republicans

The A8's solar panelled sunroof uses the sun's energy to automatically power the air-conditioning whilst the engine is off. Thus, guaranteeing a constant flow of air. Combined with insulating-glass windows (that reduce heat penetration by 30% and UV radiation by 99%), the temperature of the A8's interior is reduced by as much as 20°C. So you see even the sunroof has been re-defined in the A8. The 3.7 and 4.2 Audi A8 from Germany.



One hour under the sun and all that talk of luxury turns into nothing but hot air.

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Arab Gulf states urged to open up bourses to foreigners

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states should open their bourses to foreign investors and complete a regional link-up to spur dealing activity and attract capital, a prominent Arab economist has said.

Share dealing in the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries is negligible compared with international markets, attracting only 0.6 per cent of total investment in the developing nations. In 1996, said Henry Azzam, chief economist at the Saudi National Commercial Bank.

Mr. Azzam, addressing an economic seminar in Abu Dhabi, said high government ownership in the trading institutions and the restriction of trading to nationals in most member states had constricted regional bourses.

"To have a chance to compete, Gulf capital markets need to gain more depth and versatility. The supply and flow of stocks available for investment should be increased and a wider participation in second market activities needs to be encouraged," Mr. Azzam said.

"They should promote the idea of opening those markets first to non-nationals residing in the region and later on to international investors," he added.

"Opening up to international capital flows will bring to the Gulf new investors who may be more inclined than local investors to require securities analysis, thereby increasing the level of sophistication in the market," the economist indicated.

Mr. Azzam's figures showed GCC states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — received 0.6 per cent or around \$1.4 billion of total investments of \$232 billion in developing countries last year.

Only two GCC members — Bahrain and Oman — have opened their bourses to foreigners but they still impose restrictions on full ownership. Kuwait, the third member with a formal trading floor, has only introduced investment funds in which foreigners can have a limited stake.

The UAE has said it

could give foreign investors limited access when its long-awaited stock exchange is set up.

Saudi Arabia, where share dealing is conducted through the most sophisticated bank network in the Arab World, is also considering allowing foreigners to trade but some officials have privately warned against such a move. Qatar has no floor but it has said it is working on such a project.

"The fact that Gulf capital markets are generally closed to foreign portfolio investment has both positive and negative implications," Mr. Azzam said.

"If the governments of the region were to open the capital market for foreign investors, they would give activities a short-term boost, but this would also increase price volatility," he added.

GCC countries also have plans to link their exchanges under a 1983 economic pact which envisages the creation of a common Gulf market.

So far, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait have linked up although only a handful of companies have been cross-listed.

Mr. Azzam urged GCC governments to scale down their shareholdings in trading institutions and press ahead with plans to set up a common stock market.

"The small size of the region's stock markets should encourage the Gulf countries to push for shares to be listed and traded across boundaries forming in effect a regional capital markets," he said.

"A regional market would symbolise the GCC economic agreement, help to avoid the problems encountered because of the small size of the local markets, pool resources and provide financial institutions with a greater placing power. In short, it will help mobilise resources at the regional level," Mr. Azzam pointed out.

Official figures showed the capitalisation of the GCC stock markets totalled around \$89.9 billion at the end of 1996 compared with nearly \$85 billion at the end of 1995. Saudi Arabia had the biggest capitalisation at \$45.3 billion.

Treasury questions Bank of Israel monetary policy

TEL AVIV (R) — A senior treasury official Monday questioned the Bank of Israel's policy of absorbing excess liquidity in the market, saying it was very costly to the economy.

The central bank has been forced to buy large amounts of dollars to stop the Israeli currency from appreciating beyond its fixed trading band. The central bank has absorbed this excess liquidity by such methods as issuing short-term paper, on which it pays interest.

In 1996 this so-called sterilisation policy cost two billion shekels, said David Milgram, the treasury's budget director. He said he feared this cost would rise in 1997.

"This cost does not find expression in the government's national priorities," Mr. Milgram told reporters.

The treasury has been urging the central bank to lower interest rates, which has buoyed the shekel in the past year.

The central bank has kept monetary policy tight to control inflation.

Mr. Milgram said there were other non-budgeted costs forced upon the government, including spending passed by parliament after the budget is finalised, public sector wage agreements, pension accords and the deficits of the nation's health care funds.

Mr. Milgram said the treasury was analysing April budget data, which showed a smaller-than-expected deficit of 928 million shekels. The treasury still expects a larger-than-forecast budget deficit for all of 1997 but the size of the deviation may be smaller than was thought earlier.

Mr. Milgram said the treasury would announce in a few days the size of the deviation and then propose a budget cut to guarantee

the government meets its 1997 deficit target of 2.8 per cent of gross domestic product. Government sources say the proposed cut will likely be less than one billion shekels.

Mr. Milgram also said the treasury and health ministry were studying reform of the national health care system. Under the present system, in place since 1995, Israelis receive health care from funds called Kupat Holim and in return pay a health tax, the receipts of which the government divides among the funds.

The government is obligated to cover the deficits of the Kupat Holim, placing a growing burden on the budget.

"The national health insurance law brought about the virtual nationalisation of the health system but not the total nationalisation and turned the health funds into subcontractors of the government. The situation has caused a split between authority and responsibility and as a result health funds are rolling their deficits onto the government," Mr. Milgram said.

This situation cannot continue and we'll have to decide whether to nationalise health services completely or give the health funds more flexibility, more responsibility."

He said under the first option the government would create a health authority similar to Britain's national health service.

Under the second option the government would allow the funds to compete on price, not just on service, and at the same time require them to cover their own deficits.

"Our inclination is to go for the second option," Mr. Milgram said.

Abu Dhabi to offer free zone shares to foreigners

DUBAI (R) — Abu Dhabi will offer foreign companies up to 30 per cent ownership in a \$3 billion free trade zone to be built on the Gulf island of Saadiyat, the weekly Al-Eqtisadi magazine said.

"The Saadiyat Free Zone Authority will offer shares on the local and international market in June or September," it said in its latest issue.

"The issue will limit foreign participation to between 20 and 30 per cent," the weekly added.

Abu Dhabi officials have said the new trade zone, east of Abu Dhabi City, will specialise in storage, transporting and trading of commodities.

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REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	YEN
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7270	0.6174	1.4703	128.57	1.3795	1709.80	1.9428	5.8265
DE Mark	0.5790	1.0000	0.3572	0.8809	73.27	0.7987	986.81	1.1281	3.5728
GB Sterling	1.6198	2.7685	1.0000	2.3823	204.59	2.2345	2766.53	3.1473	8.4361
CH Franc	0.6801	1.1736	0.4193	1.0000	86.05	0.9376	1163.05	132.09	3.5891
JP Yen	0.0079	1.3639	0.4873	1.1612	1.0000	1.0895	13.50	153.42	4.6004
CA Dollar	0.7248	1.2376	0.4407	1.0636	1.09	1.2247	1.5927	4.1726	
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0096	0.3607	0.8809	1352.45	0.8965	11.36	3.4058	
FR Franc	0.0148	88.86	0.3175	75.88	65.11	0.7099	879.73	2.9978	
ES Ptas	0.0171	0.2984	0.1059	25.3225	21.70	0.2387	33.34	33.3400	

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	YEN
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7270	0.6174	1.4703	128.57	1.3795	1709.80	1.9428	5.8265
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	2.4270	0.8325	2.1414	184.01	2.0295	2573.73	2.9791	8.7891
GB Sterling	0.2866	0.4918	0.1005	0.97	83.01	0.98	123.73	0.9039	
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	4.5270	1.6303	4.38	376.07	4.14	5182.34	6.0923	
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.4685	0.1603	1.0303	88.05	0.9376	1163.05	132.09	
Kuwait Dinar	3.2884	5.6322	2.0025	5.38	463.07	5.12	6396.84	7.5813	
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.4668	0.1591	1.0288	87.01	0.9828	123.73	0.9039	
Lebanese 1000	0.85	1.4600	0.5138	1.3662	117.78	1.2585	1573.50	1.8527	
Egyptian	0.2950	0.5068	0.1803	0.4738	40.87	0.4384	543.98		

Energy									
Commodity	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit
Brent	16.10	18.35							
W. Texa	19.55	19.85							
Bony	18.10	18.35							
Dubai	17.12	17.50							
UL Gas	192.00	192.00							

Metal Prices									
Commodity	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit
Gold (oz's)	340.2	340.7							
Silver (oz's)	4.71	4.73							
Platinum (oz's)	371	372							
AL (3 Months)	1622	1627							
CU (3 Months)	2383	2388							
Zinc (3 Months)	1281	1286							
Lead (3 Months)	622	624							
Ni (3 Months)	7400	7420							

Main Equity Indices									
Index	Value	Change	% Change	High	Low	Open	Close	Volume	Sp. Cls.
New York	DOW JONES	7071.2	94.72	1.36	7077.62	6976.88	6976.88		
New York	S&P 500	812.97	14.44	1.81	812.99	798.53	798.53		
London	FT-SE 100	4458.8	10.8	0.24	4468.4	4423.8	4445		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	19514.75	239.42	1.24	19516	19187.7	19275.3		
Paris	CAC 40	2665.66	10.35	0.39	2666.16	2650.07	2655.51		
Frankfurt	DAX	3528.1	65.73	1.9	3527	3510.93	3460.37		

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	YEN
US Dollar	0.708	1.210							
GB Sterling	1.1472	1.928							
DE Mark	0.6094	1.0000							
CH Franc	0.4806	0.823							
FR Franc	0.1214	0.212							
JP Yen	0.0085	0.015							
NI Guider	0.364	0.625							
IT Lira	0.4136	0.715							

THE Daily Crossword

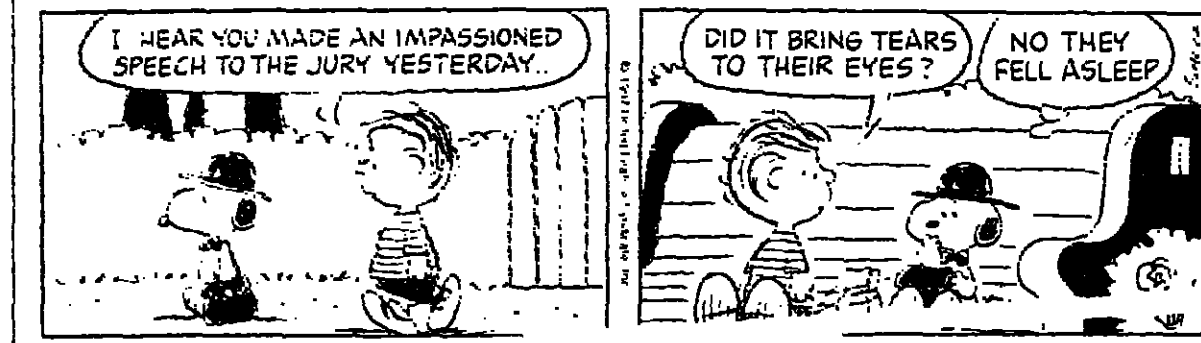
ACROSS

- Ebb
- Swindle
- Guys
- Rubber
- Whale
- Nastase of tennis
- nous
- Jamie of TV
- Logical
- Teddy
- Roosevelt's caution
- Greek letter
- Somber
- Member abbr.
- Prescription letters
- Medical priority judgment
- In the manner of
- Savage breast soother
- Item in an atelier
- "Newcastle"
- Nemo of the Dodgers
- Turner and Louise
- Ruler abbr.
- Vast plain
- Norse god
- Follows ess
- "We Got Fun?"
- Salamander
- Become enchanted
- Plumbing problem
- Where tall corn grows
- Opponent
- Funny Johnson
- Tax time VIPs
- Astringent
- Couple
- Command, old style
- Laura and Bruce

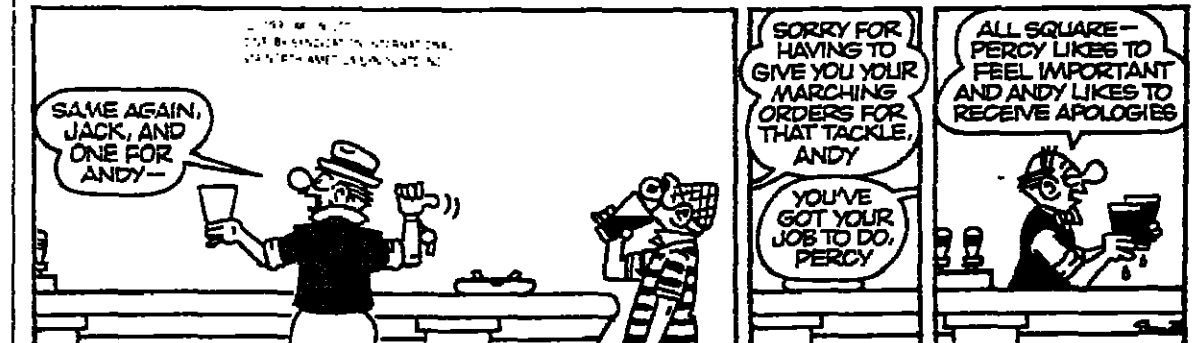
DOWN

- Pub quaff
- Judge's seat
- boy!
- Haute
- Put forth
- Rowed
- Make wealthy
- Literary device
- Electrical unit
- Two times
- Pleased
- Spectral
- Eye-bye
- "a Teenage Werewolf"
- Bridge position
- Declare
- Knit material
- Wt. units

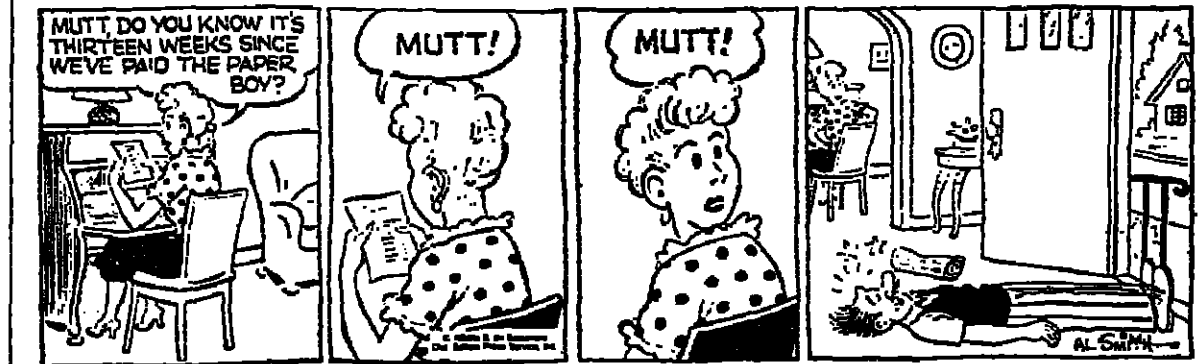
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, MAY 6, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You may not agree today with some views you have espoused, so labour on explaining your point and coming to a better understanding. Later this evening will be good for seeing close friends for recreational activities.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You should not make any radical changes in your present method of operation or difficulties could ensue. Show your good friends you value their ideas by praising their suggestions and promising to return the favour.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be careful of your words and actions today, or you could close a valuable supporter which you could not afford to do so. Later this evening is a good time to go out and visit good friends whom you have not seen for some time.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Your financial saviour faire is not very good today, so avoid making any important decisions which could be critical to your career activities. Also, postpone property repairs which are not absolutely necessary for its beauty and value.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Someone has been pressuring you to make radical changes in your business procedures today, however don't give in or you'll regret it in the days ahead. Later this evening will be good for meeting with knowledgeable people.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Stick to your routine activities even though you feel today like shirking your responsibilities and having some fun. Be kind to your mate later this evening by showing him or her a good time at a romantic location of your choice.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Avoid getting in any disagreement with friends today, as doing so would have unfortunate consequences. Drive with great care while on the highway and thereby you can eliminate and consequences which could materialise.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Keep quietly busy at your career activities today, and save socialising for later this evening. This is not a good time to ask anyone for a favour, since you are likely to be turned down, so wait for a more appropriate moment.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) If you have plans to enter into a new financial venture today, be sure to study every detail first, so that there won't be any misunderstandings. You can make some new friends later this evening who can be of assistance.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Be sure to carry through conscientiously with any and all promises you have made, thereby you can retain your good reputation. Do what you can to cheer up your mate later this evening by going to a special location.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you are confused about a financial situation today, you should not try to come to a decision without some sound advice from someone "in the know." Later this evening would be good for seeing close friends at fun locations.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your fellow associates will be unusually cooperative and energetic today, so take advantage of this situation to get much accomplished. Later tonight you can seek out a bigwig and get his or her device concerning a new project.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

TRC authorises two Jordanian firms to provide pay telephone services

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Two Jordanian companies will soon start providing national pay telephone services in Jordan at reasonable rates, Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) Director General Yusef Abu Jamous told the Jordan Times Monday.

Trans Jordan and Alpha companies have won the tenders out of 18 companies which submitted bids. Alpha offered the lowest price of 0.00425 fils per minute and Trans Jordan offered 0.014888 per minute, said

Mr. Abu Jamous.

He said that pay telephones will be installed in the areas inhabited by at least 500 citizens, adding that both companies will be operative as soon as they conclude their agreements with TRC on June 5.

"More pay telephone will be installed where TRC thinks there is a justifiable demand," said Mr. Abu Jamous.

TRC and the government, Mr. Abu Jamous said, facilitated both companies' connection to the telephone network.

"TRC exempted them from licence acquisition fees

and also gave them priority by providing them with telephone lines. The government exempted them from customs on equipment," explained Mr. Abu Jamous.

A new national paging service is expected to begin operations soon as a competitor to Jordan Radio Paging (JRP) which already provides paging services in central Jordan and Irbid.

TRC, an independent body, will provide a large range of telecommunication services to be introduced to Jordanians through privately owned companies.

Mr. Abu Jamous said that TRC will soon issue licenses

for public mobile radio (muncking) operators.

Regarding the tender for a second GSM cellular operator to compete with Fastlink, Mr. Abu Jamous said that the tender is now frozen.

The TRC is in charge of the allocation of all frequencies in Jordan as well as resolving interconnection disputes among consumers, operators and service providers.

Mr. Abu Jamous told the Jordan Times that the TRC will monitor prices and the quality of the services provided by the two national pay telephone companies.

Nestle opens first \$20 million food factory in Syria

DAMASCUS (R) — Switzerland's food and beverage group Nestle Sunday opened its first factory in Syria and would aim to produce 6,750 tonnes of various food products per year.

Syrian Industry Minister Ahmad Nezamuddin, who attended the inauguration ceremony, welcomed the establishment of the \$20 million factory which was encouraged by a 1991 investment law that offered facilities to investors.

Mr. Nezamuddin said executive director of Nestle International, Peter Brabeck Letmathe, told him the firm would use the

Syria factory to distribute its production in Jordan, Lebanon, Cyprus and Iran and that the company would discuss the possibility of expanding the plant after studying the market.

The Nestle factory in Syria will produce baby foodstuffs, noodles, chicken soup, milk and chocolate products.

According to the company's founding law, Nestle has a 60 per cent share in the project, 26 per cent for Syrian businessmen and 14 per cent for Libra Investment Ltd. of Britain.

The project will create 151 jobs.

Study: Asia-Pacific to comprise a third of world's aviation market

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The Asia-Pacific region will comprise a third of the world's aviation market in two decades, with an average annual travel growth of 6.6 per cent, U.S.-based Boeing Co.'s chief for India has said.

"The future market for airplanes clearly is outside of the United States," Dinesh Keskar told a news conference.

"The Asia-Pacific region will constitute 33 per cent of the world's aviation market by 2016. North America will record the second largest growth at 28 per cent and in Europe it will be about 16 per cent," Mr. Keskar indicated.

"The world fleet, which was 11,500 in 1996, will grow to 23,600 in 2016," he said, adding that the 16,160 new jets would be worth \$1.1 trillion.

Mr. Keskar said the highest annual air travel growth after the Asia-Pacific would be in Latin America (6.4 per cent), followed by the trans-Pacific route (5.7 per cent), Europe (4.4 per cent) and North America (3.1 per cent).

"But the figures can be somewhat misleading because the traffic in North America, the trans-Atlantic and Europe are already way ahead," he said.

"In India, which has a middle class of about 150 million, we have 100 planes. In the United States, there are an equal number of people who could fly and their fleet is currently about 6,000," he explained.

Mr. Keskar said a Boeing

study released in Renton, Washington predicted that India would spend \$16.6 billion on 250 planes over the next 20 years.

"The traffic is phenomenal. I tried booking a flight to the United States on Dec. 15 by Air India and was told the earliest available booking was only on Jan. 25," Mr. Keskar said.

"I came on a fully booked flight to New Delhi from Bombay to attend this press conference. I was late because of the long line of cars. New Delhi airport is getting worse than a bus stand," he added.

But Mr. Keskar echoed a warning by other aviation experts that only a handful of airports in the region were equipping themselves for the travel boom.

"Singapore is planning to add a Changi 3 and Hong Kong's new airport will become operational soon. But elsewhere, the airports are getting saturated and very little is being done by way of modernisation or expansion," he noted.

In December, Pierre Jeannot, director-general of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), said Asian air traffic was expected to grow on average by 8.6 per cent a year between 1990 and 2010.

Mr. Jeannot, however, pointed to undersized infrastructure, manpower shortages and poor regional coordination as major impediments and called on governments to plan infrastructure investment and strengthen regional coordination on air traffic control and route management.

Egypt selling off more cement shares

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has announced its biggest partial privatisation since at least early March, when the state sold about 3.5 million shares in cigarette manufacturer Eastern Company for over 300 million pounds (\$89 million).

The state's Holding Company for Mining and Refractories said the shares, currently owned by four partially privatised cement companies, would go on sale by public subscription to individuals, mutual funds and private-sector companies.

It said the companies were offering one million shares and could increase this to 4.2 million, about 8.5 per cent of Suez Cement's total equity. It will announce further details soon.

It will be the biggest privatisation since at least early March, when the state sold about 3.5 million shares in cigarette manufacturer Eastern Company for over 300 million pounds.

All of the privatisation offers since then have been relatively small. The latest was of 350,000 shares in Development and Engineering Consultancy, worth about 11.5 million pounds. The offer has closed but the agents have not yet indicated the level of public interest.

Cairo brokers say they are anxiously awaiting new privatisation offers to stimulate the market, which has stabilised after a sharp correction from record highs.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Company posts JD315,000 loss, cancels decision to increase capital

** A DECISION to raise the capital of the Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Company (ICAC) from JD5 million to JD7.5 million was cancelled as shareholders decided during an extraordinary meeting to keep the capital at JD5 million. The shareholders voted for the cancellation after reviewing the company's 1996 annual report which showed that the ICAC posted a net loss of JD315,000 last year. Even the retained earnings from JD423,000 at the end of 1995 to JD108,000 at the end of 1996.

ICAC Chairman Mohammad Abu Hassan told the general assembly the loss was due to economic "recession" in the local market and that has affected the company's operations at the local and export levels and resulted in lower demand for ICAC products. He explained that the wait-and-see attitude, lack of market activity and stiff competition from local competitors and foreign products had a clear negative impact on the company's activities. As such, Mr. Abu Hassan pointed out that ICAC sought to improve its relations with the Civil Service Consumer Corporation and the Military Consumer Corporation and continued supplying them with their demands for chemical detergents, soap, biscuits, cosmetics and paints.

Noting that the company's eight plants produced a total of 15,529 tonnes of the aforementioned products as well as glycerine and plastic containers, Mr. Abu Hassan said total sales amounted to JD14.76 million of which JD10.10 million were in the local market and about JD4.66 million were exports. He indicated that the company was able to reach new export markets other than the traditional ones with a total of \$411,000 worth of goods reaching Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen, Oman, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Russia and Ukraine.

Mr. Abu Hassan announced that the company was successful few weeks ago as it clinched new export contracts to supply Iraq with 935 tonnes of detergents and 381 tonnes of soap within the framework of the Jordanian-Iraq trade protocol. Moreover, ICAC has received approval for offers to supply Iraq with 8,000 tonnes of detergents and 2,500 tonnes of soap under the oil-for-food agreement between Iraq and the United Nations.

ICAC has large investments in two affiliated companies that were set up few years ago in Mafrqa on 500 dunums of land. These two firms, which carry a total investment of JD10 million, have provided 500 employment opportunities (Al Ra'i).

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RANOB

YUNIF

NARIFA

UNLACH

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumble: OUNCE PHONY DILUTE ABSURD
Answer: What a date with her tennis coach turned into - A COURTSHIP

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SYRIAN											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 05/05/1997											
PART 12 MONTHS HIGH	PART 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / S	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
269,000	213,000	ABAB BANK	11.7	1.57	7	220	56100	255.50	255.00	-0.50	
2,100	1,600	JOR. INDUSTRIAL BK.	5	0.00	11	5125	9168	1.75	1.79	0.04	
5,500	4,100	CAIRO JORDAN BANK	9.3	3.33	3	6550	29475	4.55	4.50	-0.05	
3,400	2,700	BANK OF JORDAN	10.5	0.00	3	390	1709	4.90	4.96	0.06	
1,210	890	KID. EAST INTL. BK.	63.1	0.00	2	3000	2080	9.95	9.96	0.01	
5,100	4,250	THE HOUSING BK.	14.1	4.11	16	3648	17170	4.70	4.72	0.02	
2,950	2,440	JOR. EDWART BANK	18.3	0.00	12	1622	6665	2.57	2.53	-0.04	
1,000	800	JOR. EAST. INTL. BK.	7.8	8.64	3	7500	4075	8.81	8.81	0.00	
4,130	3,480	JOR. TEL. INTL. BK.	14.4	3.40	8	4341	15302	3.53	3.53	0.00	
2,850	1,600	JOINT. AL-SAL. (SYRIA)	9	15.00	6	1751	1751	1.02	1.02	0.00	
1,450	1,000	WILLIAMS. INTL. BK.	9	0.00	8	1600	3680	1.07	1.11	0.04	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											
4,550	4,200	JERUSALEM INSUR.	11.3	4.82	1	500	2075	4.25	4.15	-0.10	
1,400	1,400	UNIVERSAL INSUR.	9.8	0.00	1	3600	4768	1.40	1.33	-0.07	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
1,820	1,450	JOR. EL-KHAYMA PBL.	7.6	6.33	7	2950	4595	1.55	1.58	0.03	
7,500	6,000	VEICEL. OWNERS FED.	7.8	4.90	2	900	6395	7.10	7.15	0.05	
5,050	4,100	ABAB INTL. BOTTLES	17.4	2.92	2	120	439	4.47	4.40	-0.07	
1,530	830	KELLY. HORTICULT	9	0.00	1	450	446	9.95	9.99	0.01	
9,850	7,320	ALBA	13.0	6.90	1	200	1450	7.60	7.25	-0.35	
2,200	1,700	KID. EAST HOTELS	18.3	0.00	4	4800	5627	1.17	1.20	0.03	
1,720	2,900	JOR. TEL. INTL. BK.	7.8	0.00	4	8000	2400	3.00	3.00	0.00	
1,220	960	SARSA EDUCATION	9	0.00	3	950	927	9.97	9.98	0.01	
2,230	1,640	UNIVERSAL CO.	7.8	6.67	3	500	823	1.64	1.65	0.01	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
1,250	930	ATMOSPHERE	9	0.00	4	2200	2233	1.05	1.05	0.00	
3,800	3,000	JOR. CHEST FACT.	25.2	2.94	9	1237	4625	3.78	3.74	-0.04	
3,500	2,710	JOR. PROSPERITY MINE	8.6	3.24	2	400	1226	3.05	3.09	0.04	
1,400	950	ABAB JORDAN CO.	13.5	3.45	1	180	180	5.70	5.80	0.10	
10,400	8,720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.1	9.49	13	490	4552	9.24	9.37	0.13	
7,300	6,280	JORDAN TANNING	7.8	4.72	2	325	2067	6.70	6.36	-0.34	
3,250	1,650	INDUSTRIAL COM. BAK.	10.5	0.00	12	3128	1774	1.70	1.77	0.07	
7,600	6,430	JOR. WAREHOUSE	9.6	5.76	22	6393	22206	3.49	3.47	-0.02	
4,100	3,040	ABAB FARM. MINT.	7.6	0.00	9	240	1824	7.72	7.72	0.00	
2,570	2,050	JORDAN DANCE	7.6	10.82	2	267	242	2.46	2.45	-0.01	
4,910	4,250	ABAB ALBA. INTL.	11.0	5.59	2	298	1325	4.40	4.47	0.07	
5,400	3,130	ABAB ALBA. INTL.	8.4	8.85	4	1450	4880	3.35	3.39	0.04	
9,960	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.8	0.00	8	13000	6430	3.42	3.42	0.00	
1,170	1,020	ABAB ALBA. INTL.	10.4	6.77	2	6250	6375	1.02	1.02	0.00	
1,520	1,010	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	4	1250	1343	1.05	1.10	0.05	
910	840	NATIONAL IND.	8.1	10.91	6	2500	1540	5.95	5.95	0.00	
1,540	700	INTERMED. VEHIC. CHRM.	9	0.00	9	2250	1824	7.72	7.72	0.00	
1,150	630	JOR. ROCCMOLO IND.	9	0.00	3	750	460	6.33	6.33	0.00	
3,730	2,130	KELLY. HORTICULT. WARE.	15.5	0.00	9	2250	1824	7.72	7.72	0.00	
1,170	870	JOR. STEEL. CHRM.	9	0.00	6	1500	1381	6.99	7.70	0.71	
1,670	1,120	ABAB FARM. CHRM.	25.8	0.00	5	1500	2090	1.38	1.38	0.00	
2,660	1,410	UNIV. WARE. CHRM.	7	2.18	2	250	243	1.42	1.45	0.03	
1,780	1,300	ABAB FARM. CHRM.	15.2	0.00	15	7250	8218	1.13	1.13	0.00	
1,690	1,300	KELLY. CHROMIUM	12.7	5.19	1	150	203	1.36	1.35	-0.01	
1,230	840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.8	0.00	10	1650	1409	8.55	8.55	0.00	
1,360	1,080	JORDAN CO.	17.1	0.00	12	3985	1551	1.17	1.15	-0.02	
1,440	860	UNION CH. & VEG.	27.9	0.00	2	250	220	0.88	0.88	0.00	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
GRAND TOTAL											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 05/05/1997											
670	370	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	1	100	40	4.40	4.40	0.00	
790	440	JOR. TRADE FAC.	12.7	0.00	10	10000	4400	4.40	4.40	0.00	
840	370	ABAB FEN. INVEST.	9	0.00	35	126400	59412	4.40	4.40	0.00	
950	740	AL-SHARQ INTL. 75%	9	0.00	6	11750	5725	7.75	7.75	0.00	
640	400	JOR. TEL. INTL. BK.	9	0.00	4	1800	432	2.40	2.40	0.00	
740	510	ABAB FOOD & MND.	9	0.00	2	2100	1155	5.55	5.55	0.00	
690	430	ABAB INTL. INV. TRD.	90.7	0.00	4	1300	460	4.44	4.44	0.00	
1,720	1,490	WELLS. VENTURE	9	0.00	4	2150	1075	5.00	5.00	0.00	
840	400	KAT. MTL. IND. HANICO	9	0.00	42	59256	33048	5.55	5.55	0.00	
640	430	HAYMAN DIES & MACHS	9	0.00	4	11250	6311	5.56	5.57	0.01	
980	720	JORDAN SICKS	9	0.00	8	1758	1553	7.72	7.72	0.00	
660	430	ABAB ELKST. IND.	9	0.00	6	60000	30600	5.51	5.51	0.00	
730	600	MIDWEST FARM. 75%	9	0.00	1	250	90	6.00	6.01	0.01	
1,310	860	UNION TONKADO 75%	9	0.00	8	4000	4072	8.80	8.80	0.00	
770	550	HAIT. FARM. 65%	9	0.00	1	1000	250	6.00	6.00	0.00	
640	390	INDS. RES.	25.9	0.00	8	6850	2877	4.42	4.42	0.00	
820	590	HAIT. POLYMER	9	0.00	5	35000	23300	5.55	5.55	0.00	
870	530	KID. EAST COMPLEX	7.7	0.00	11	12050	7852	6.67	6.66	-0.01	
GRAND TOTAL											
159 350714 183162											
* : New 12 months low											
* : Listed during the past 12 months											
* : P/S ratio is 100 or more											
* : Negative P/S											
* : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year											

Romanian coaches hope to take Jordanian gymnasts to new heights

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In a serious move by the Jordan Gymnastics Federation (JGF) to raise the level of the sport in the country, two Romanian professional coaches have been recruited to take the responsibility of the Kingdom's national team.

Coming from a country with a long history and top world records in the sport, the JGF hopes the new coaches will take the game to new heights.

Ioan Danciu, an experienced coach with a record of several gold medals, will take charge of the women's team.

Danciu holds a BA in Physical Culture and Sport from Timisoara University with a long history of achievements as a coach and assistant coach in Romania and France.

He guided the Romanian girls team to the gold medal at Romania's National Junior Championship 3rd Category in 1995 and a silver medal in the IV Category in 1989.

Last holding the position of assistant coach at Cambrouaise Gymnastics Club in France since 1992, Danciu said that Jordan will be a new experience for him and his colleagues.

"I love Jordan and that's why I wanted to come here to work," he told the Jordan Times.

"It will be a new experience for me to train an Arab team," he added.

Danciu noted that a new plan awaits the Jordanian girls team.

"More training hours and more serious practice awaits the girls," he said. "Training will take more than 5 hours a day."

Accompanying coach Danciu is another achiever in world gymnastics — 21-year-old Camelia Mindricel.

Mindricel was a member of the Romanian national gymnastics team from 1986-1992.

She holds two gold medals as a player with her country's team at the European Championships in 1990 and at the Romanian National Championship in 1986-1987.

Mindricel participated with the Romanian team at the World Championship in Paris and in the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992.

As a coach, Mindricel guided her country's team to a silver medal at the Romanian National Championship IV Category in 1994-1995.

With an experience in artistic gymnastics, Mindricel said that Jordanian girls will be exposed to extensive training — Romanian style.

"We will try to expose the girls to the Romanian experience in gymnastics with hopes of reaching a more serious level," she said.

"They will find it difficult at first but with a lot of work and dedication they will attain the level they hope for," she added.

With a degree from the Gymnasium for Physical Culture and Sport in 1994 and the High School for Trainers of Bucharest in 1995, Mindricel hopes for an international competition for the Jordanian team.

"Our aim is to get the team to an international level and not regional events only," she told the Jordan Times.

This is the first experience for the Jordan Gymnastics Federation with a team of Romanian coaches after the Russian coach stayed for only three months.

Olympiakos need 1 point for big sporting double

ATHENS (R) — Greek giants Olympiakos are just one point away from winning their first Greek soccer championship in 10 years following a resounding 5-0 victory over Paniliakos Sunday.

The footballers are looking to make it a silverware double for the Athens club after Olympiakos's basketball side scooped the European Championship in Rome last month, beating Barcelona in the final.

With three matches left, Olympiakos are nine points ahead of Athens rivals AEK at the top of the table.

AEK crashed to a shock 2-1 home defeat against Paok leaving Olympiakos needing just one more point to guarantee the title.



Miami Heat center Alonzo Mourning (top) and Orlando Magic forward Dwyane Wade go after a rebound in the third quarter of their NBA playoff game in Miami. Mourning had 22 points in the Heat's 91-83 victory over the Magic. (Reuters photo)

Heat and Hawks advance, Jazz win second round opener

MIAMI (R) — The Miami Heat and Atlanta Hawks survived their first games on their home courts Sunday to advance to the second round of the NBA playoffs.

The Heat, who blew out Orlando in the first two games only to lose the next two, turned back the Magic 91-83.

Atlanta rallied for an 84-79 win over the Detroit Pistons, winning the final two games after falling behind two games to one in the series.

In Miami, Tim Hardaway hit a crucial three-pointer from the top of the key with 15.1 seconds left and Alonzo Mourning scored 22 points to lead the Heat into the Eastern Conference semifinals, where they will face the New York Knicks.

The meeting will mark the first time Miami coach Pat Riley faces his former team in the playoffs.

"No one said it would be easy," Riley said of the series that surprisingly went the distance. "Maybe we looked past Orlando when we were up two games to none, I hope the guys learned from this."

"We stood them off, and now we move on. The Knicks will be tough, I know that."

Voshon Leonard scored 13 of his 19 points in the third quarter to help Miami build a 69-53 lead.

Penny Hardaway scored 33 points and Derek Strong added 13 for Orlando, which nearly erased a 16-point deficit in the final nine minutes with a furious rally that came up short.

The Heat matched their largest lead of the game at 77-61 on a John Crotty three-pointer at the 9:08 mark. But Orlando reeled off 10 consecutive points — eight from Nick Anderson.

A 7-0 Magic run pulled

Orlando within 82-78 and a Darrell Armstrong, they made it 86-83 with 41 seconds left.

But Tim Hardaway worked the shot clock down before nailing his key three-pointer with 15.1 seconds left and Mourning added two free throws for the final margin.

"Tim Hardaway's three was the only one he made all day," said Magic coach Richie Adubato.

"Unfortunately, that was the one that broke our backs and gave them the game."

In Atlanta, Christian Laettner and Steve Smith hit clutch jumpers down the stretch and Dikembe Mutombo made two key blocks on Grant Hill to propel the Hawks to an Eastern Conference semifinal confrontation with the defending NBA champion Chicago Bulls.

The Hawks erased deficits of 13 and eight points and survived a frantic finish to win a fifth game in the first round for the second successive year.

"We were down in the game, we didn't give up," Laettner said. "We were down in the series, we didn't give up."

Laettner scored 23 points, but none bigger than a jumper he made over Hill to snap a 77-77 tie with 1:14 to go.

On Atlanta's next possession, Smith made a three-pointer from the left corner while falling into his own bench, giving the Hawks an 82-77 lead with 41 seconds left.

Before those baskets, Detroit all-star Hill — who led the team with 21 points but scored none in the fourth quarter — had a pair of inside shots blocked by Mutombo.

"I think they forgot I was the defensive player of the year," said Mutombo, who

finished with 17 points, nine rebounds and five steals and Smith contributed 13 points to the Hawks. Lindsey Hunter scored 17 points and Dumas added 10.

Mookie Blaylock had 12 points, nine rebounds and five steals and Smith contributed 13 points to the Hawks. Lindsey Hunter scored 17 points and Dumas added 10.

"It was a great, great play off game and what it came down to is big plays made by big players," said coach Doug Collins.

At Utah, the Jazz opened the Western Conference semifinals with a convincing 93-77 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers.

Karl Malone had 22 points and 13 rebounds and John Stockton and Horacecek added 10 points apiece for the top-seeded Jazz, who were coming off a week's rest after sweeping the Clippers in the first round.

Nick Van Exel scored 22 points for the Lakers, who eliminated the Portland Trail Blazers in four games Friday night and had only about 40 hours between series.

Lakers centre Shaquille O'Neal, who averaged 33 points per game against Portland, was double covered Sunday and held to 17 points. Eddie Jones also chipped in 17 for the obviously fatigued Lakers.

Utah pulled away by outscoring Los Angeles 25-15 in the second quarter to lead 52-40 at the half and they were never seriously threatened.

"I'm a happy young man right now," said Malone.

Computer defeats Kasparov to tie chess match

NEW YORK (R) — The supercomputer Deep Blue, playing like a human, defeated world chess champion Garry Kasparov Sunday to tie their six-game rematch at one victory each.

Deep Blue's victory after 45 moves and 3 hours and 42 minutes play was the second time in history that a computer program had defeated a reigning world champion in a classical chess format.

The first time was in February 1996 in Philadelphia when the IBM system won the first game of their rivalry, a battle between human and silicon chip that is a test of our relationship with computers.

Kasparov recovered to win that match overall.

"This was real chess, not computer chess," Deep Blue's grandmaster consultant, Joel Benjamin of the United States, told hundreds of spectators who watched Sunday's second game in a Manhattan office complex.

"This is the kind of game that the very best human players would be proud of."

Benjamin and other expert observers said the computer established a special advantage out of the opening, restricting the 34-year-old Russian grandmaster to mostly passive moves.

Usually, computers excel at complicated tactical struggles in which their massive calculating powers give them the edge.



World chess champion Garry Kasparov plays his first move of game two of the match against the IBM supercomputer Deep Blue, in New York. The Russian grandmaster, who won game one, will play six games against Deep Blue in a rematch of their first contest in 1996. (Reuters photo)

However, in this game, Deep Blue demonstrated that it "understood" positional concepts too, the experts said.

"I think the computer played an excellent positional game and I was impressed by how it closed all the possible counterplay Kasparov may have dreamed of," said Czech-born grandmaster Lubo Kavalek. "It was incredibly well done."

The match is tied at one point each. One point is awarded for a win and a 1/2 point for a draw. Kasparov

won the first game with the white pieces Saturday. The winner will receive \$700,000 and the loser \$400,000. The third game was scheduled for Tuesday and the match ends on May 11.

Kasparov, who won Saturday with some finesse, appeared calm as he left the small playing room on the 35th floor of the building. He did not appear at the post-game news conference.

During the game he frequently held his head in his hands and grimaced, clearly

uncomfortable because he could not untangle his black pieces from the grip of his opponent's men.

"It was easily the best game I've ever seen a computer play and one of the best games I've ever seen anything play against Kasparov,"

Frederic Friedel, the creator of chess-playing computer called "Fritz" and one of the Russian's closest advisors, told Reuters. "It played very intelligent chess and this is what we've always been slightly afraid of. I'm terrified right now."

Deep Blue and Kasparov opened the game with the classical Ruy Lopez or Spanish game, sometimes referred to as "The Spanish torture." The system is named after a chess-playing Spanish priest who lived in the 16th century.

The clash between Kasparov and the machine is part chess match and part research project to help build computers that can make complex, simultaneous calculations at high speeds. Among the applications for the technology developed for deep blue are weather forecasting, air traffic control, data mining and molecular dynamics.

Chess playing is considered ideal for computers because the game involves a specific number of physical objects governed by simple, clearly defined rules.

Kasparov, considered by most experts to be the best player in the history of chess, had no advance information of deep blue's most recent games or improvements made to its programme. Deep Blue, an IBM rs/6000 sp parallel processor with specialised microchips for chess, calculates hundreds of millions of moves per second.

IBM computer scientists have also infused its software with more knowledge of chess, a factor that Kasparov has acknowledged will be his biggest obstacle if he is to defeat the machine over six games.

Filippini ends 3-year drought to win ATT Challenge

ATLANTA (R) — Marcelo Filippini of Uruguay ended a personal three-year title drought with a straight sets victory over seventh-seeded Australian Jason Stoltenberg in the final of the ATT Challenge Sunday.

The 92nd-ranked Filippini played near perfect clay court tennis in beating Stoltenberg 7-6 (7-2) 6-4.

Filippini dropped just one set all week on the way to picking up the \$43,000 champion's check. The 39th-ranked Stoltenberg earned \$25,300 as runner-up.

"It's an unbelievable feeling winning five tough matches in a row," said Filippini, who more than doubled his 1997 earnings with Sunday's victory.

In collecting his fourth career title — all on clay — with a 94-minute victory, Filippini avenged a quarter-final defeat to the Australian last week and evened their head-to-head record at 2-2.

"You win a trophy and it's very nice. You never forget this week. It's a perfect week," Filippini said.

"It was also shown live on television at home in Uruguay and that makes it even nicer. I would

love to be there now."

Both finalists played nearly flawless tennis in the first set, rarely missing and mixing up their shots to score winners with groundstrokes, dropshots, lobs and volleys.

Stoltenberg got the first break but could not make it stand up as Filippini came up with a big service break when the Australian was serving for the set at 6-5.

Stoltenberg misfired with two double-faults in the tie-break and was unable to recover as Filippini took the breaker 7-2, ending it with an ace.

"I really feel I gave him the match today," Stoltenberg said. "I was up 6-5 and should have served it out. After that it was a long way back. He took advantage of my mistakes and he played well."

The level of play dropped in the second set as both players committed unforced errors, trading breaks in the third and fourth games.

The pace picked up again after that with Filippini scoring the critical service break to lead 5-4 when Stoltenberg chipped a backhand wide.

The Uruguayan reached match point with a forehand passing shot but could not capitalise on

his first opportunity as Stoltenberg passed him with a backhand. Filippini won the match on his second match point as the Australian netted a forehand off Filippini's forehand volley.

Filippini said he learned over the course of the week how to handle the difficult windy conditions here.

"I think it bothered him a little more on his serve," said Filippini, who landed an impressive 79 percent of his first serves in play, compared to 61 percent for the seventh seed.

"Thinking about the wind, I played a really good match. I was more focused and kept on trying to play my game."

Stoltenberg was disappointed to lose, but considered his showing over the past two weeks a very positive sign after undergoing wrist surgery in January.

"It was a little unexpected getting to the semifinals (in Orlando) and finals these two weeks," he said. "It gave me a good feeling."

<p>CINEMA TEL: 634144</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA "1"</p> <p>Johnie Depp...in</p> <p>NICK OF TIME</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL: 634144</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA "1"</p> <p>Demi Moore ... in</p> <p>STRIPTease</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL: 634144</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA "1"</p> <p>Top Disney production</p> <p>101 DALMATIANS</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5:00, 6:30</p> <p>Demi Moore ... in</p> <p>STRIPTease</p> <p>Shows: 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL: 634144</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA "1"</p> <p>CONCORD "1"</p> <p>Winner of 9 Oscars</p> <p>THE ENGLISH PATIENT</p> <p>Shows: 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00</p> <p>CONCORD "2"</p> <p>Michael Jordan...in</p> <p>SPACEJAM</p> <p>Shows: 3:30, 6:00</p>	<p>Mab'l & Nishan's Theatre</p> <p>TEL: 625155</p> <p>The political satire</p> <p>AMN YA HO</p> <p>For reservations call 625155</p>
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Monaco celebrate; United, Rangers wait

LONDON (R) — Monaco popped the champagne corks after wrapping up the French title but Manchester United and Rangers were forced to put their celebrations on ice at the weekend.

United were held 2-2 by Leicester in the English Premier League Saturday, while Celtic beat Hibernian 3-1 on Sunday to deny Rangers a night of celebrations.

Juventus's campaign for Italy's Serie A title wavered when they were held to a 0-0 draw by Sampdoria.

Bayern Munich remained three clear at the top of the German League after salvaging a 3-3 draw against 1860 Munich despite being reduced to nine men.

France

Bordeaux helped Monaco win their first French League title since 1988 when they held Paris St Germain to a 2-2 draw at the Parc Des Princes Saturday.

Caen prevented Monaco from celebrating their title in style when they held the team from the principality to a 2-2 draw at home Sunday.

It was the sixth title for Monaco, who won their first 36 years ago.

England

Manchester United's title celebra-

tions were put on hold after they could only draw 2-2 at Leicester.

Arsenal's title hopes disappeared when they lost 1-0 at home to Newcastle but Liverpool kept their chances alive by coming from behind to beat Tottenham 2-1.

Italy

Parma injected some life into the Italian title race Sunday, coming back to beat Atalanta 2-1 and move within four points of leaders Juventus who were held 0-0 at home by Sampdoria.

The victory kept alive Parma's hopes of overhauling the Turin club and significantly boosted their chances of finishing second and thus earning a place in next season's European Cup.

Germany

Bayern Munich missed the chance to go five points clear at the top of the Bundesliga on Sunday, salvaging a 3-3 draw with local rivals 1860 Munich thanks only to a Carsten Jancker goal two minutes from time.

Second-placed Bayer Leverkusen drew 2-2 with hosts Borussia Moenchengladbach on Saturday.

Spain

Real Madrid shook off their internal problems and an early goal from Sporting Gijon to score a convincing 3-1 win on Sunday.

Davor Suker ended his goal drought to find the net twice, and set-piece specialist Roberto Carlos thundered home another as Real took a provisional 11-point lead over Barcelona who play on Monday.

The Netherlands

Argentine striker Pablo Sanchez scored both goals as Feyenoord beat Nac Breda 2-0 on Sunday to move to the top of the Dutch First Division.

Feyenoord have 69 points, one more than PSV Eindhoven, who did not play this weekend but could regain top spot on Wednesday when they play Sparta Rotterdam.

Scotland

Celtic's desperate bid to deny Glasgow rivals Rangers a ninth successive Scottish League title extended a further 24 hours on Sunday when they beat Hibernian 3-1.

Rangers will be crowned champions if they take just one point from their game against Motherwell.

Johnson jeered after easy victory

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Double Olympic gold medalist Michael Johnson was jeered before and after winning the 200 metres at the Rio de Janeiro athletics Grand Prix Sunday.

Fans chanted abusive words as Johnson paraded in front of the main stand after the race, which he won in 20.29 seconds, comfortably beating fellow American Jon Drummond.

Johnson was widely criticised in the Brazilian media at the weekend after allegedly pushing away a young fan who had wanted to pose for a photograph with him.

Johnson, who wore purple running shoes instead of the famous gold pair he used at the Olympics, shrugged off the whole episode.

"I came here to run my race. I've run it and now I'm going home. That's my job. I'm not here to worry about the crowd," he said.

Newspaper reports claimed the young fan burst into tears after Johnson refused to be photographed at his Copacabana hotel on Friday.

Local witnesses, however, said the reports were exaggerated.

One of the organisers said Johnson would happily have posed for the photograph with the admirer if the Brazilian media had not been at the hotel at the time.

"I've always had an excellent image everywhere I go," Johnson said.

"I've never had any problem like this before. I'm welcomed in Asia, in America and in Europe."

Canada's Donovan Bailey, running his first outdoor race this year, overcame weariness to win the 100 metres in 10.13.

A lethargic Bailey said he was too slow out of the blocks and finished poorly. He won by 0.13 seconds from American Terry Bowen.

"My start needs improving, my first 30 metres needs improving and my last 30 metres needs improving," said Bailey.

"I was not as relaxed as I could have been. But it was my first race of the year and you always make mistakes in your first race."



American sprinter Michael Johnson (L) heads toward the finish line of the men's 200m race at the Brazil Track and Field Grand Prix, in Rio de Janeiro. Johnson, the world record holder in the event, placed first with a time of 20.29 seconds. It was the first Grand Prix of the 1997 season (Reuters photo).

The Olympic champion added he was not used to the early morning start.

"I had to get up at eight o'clock which was kind of difficult," he said after his 10:30 a.m. start.

"I only get up that early to go to the airport."

Bailey and Johnson, who completed a unique double in Atlanta when he won the 200 and 400 metres, are involved in a showdown over 150 metres in Toronto on June 1 to find the "world's fastest man."

Bailey has been caught in a heated debate with the U.S. Media over what he claims is a lack of respect for non-U.S. athletes.

"I just think there was a huge lack of respect for all the non-American athletes who won medals in Atlanta," Bailey said after his race on Sunday.

"I'm not anti-American, I live there."

Olympic champion Allen Johnson of the United States comfortably won the 110 metres hurdles.

Johnson clocked 13.37 to win ahead of Anier Garcia of Cuba and American Mark Crear.

"I ran a good time and I liked my start," he said.

But two women's Olympic champions had a miserable day.

Triple jump champion and world record holder Inessa Kravets of Ukraine finished third while Germany's Astrid Kumbernuss was second in the shot put behind Ukraine's Vita Pavlych.

Martinez leads 19-hit Yankee assault; A's lose 11-0

KANSAS CITY (R) — Red hot Tino Martinez belted two of the Yankees' five home runs Sunday to lead a 19-hit attack that propelled New York to a 13-5 walloping of the Kansas City Royals.

Martinez, who leads the majors with 40 RBI, went 4-for-5. He smacked a solo homer in the third inning off Glendon Rusch (2-2) and added a two-run shot off Jeff Montgomery in the eighth.

"I'm in one of those good grooves," Martinez said. "I'm really seeing the ball good. I'm staying back and swinging at good pitches."

Brian Boehringer (1-1) replaced a wild Kenny Rogers after 2 2/3 innings and threw three scoreless innings, striking out seven while allowing three hits for the win. Rusch gave up seven runs and 10 hits with

a pair of walks in 3 2/3 innings.

In the third inning with Derek Jeter aboard, Williams and Martinez hit back-to-back homers to give the yanks a 4-0 lead. Williams has four homers and Martinez has 12.

Fielder added a two-run shot in a four-run fourth and Posada's first homer was a solo shot in a four-run seventh.

In Baltimore, Roberto Alomar hit a grand slam and drove in five runs and Rocky Copping and Mike Johnson combined on a four-hitter as the Orioles embarrassed the Oakland Athletics 11-0 for their fifth win in six games.

Cal Ripken had three hits, drove in two runs and scored two more for the Orioles, who improved the American League's best record to 19-8, including

11-4 at home.

Ripken drove in runs in the first and fifth innings off Ariel Prieto (2-2), helping the Orioles to a 4-0 lead.

In Cleveland, Willie Blair threw 5 2/3 scoreless innings before a line drive fractured his jaw and Tony Clark and Jody Reed added RBI singles as the Detroit Tigers snapped a 13-game losing streak to the Indians, 2-0.

The shutout was the second this season for the Tigers after just four last year and only the second Detroit win at Jacobs field in 21 games.

In Toronto, Pat Hentgen returned to Cy Young form with a four-hitter and Carlos Delgado's fourth-inning RBI single gave the Blue Jays a 1-0 win over the Minnesota Twins.

Hentgen (2-1) struck out 10 and walked one in his first complete game of the season. He retired 17 straight batters from the last out in the first inning until walking Matt Lawton with one out in the seventh.

In Seattle, Jamie Moyer allowed five hits over seven innings and Dan Wilson drove in four runs to lead the Mariners to a 9-0 rout of the Milwaukee Brewers.

Moyer (1-0) and Scott Sanders combined on the first shutout of the season for the Mariners, who have alternated wins and losses in their last 11 games.

Joey Cora had three hits, two runs and an RBI for Seattle, which had 12 hits and scored in its last five at-bats.

In Chicago, Jaime Navar-

ro allowed a pair of runs over seven innings and Harold Baines homered and added an RBI single as the White Sox won a series for the first time this season, defeating the Anaheim Angels 4-2.

Navarro (3-1) allowed eight hits and one earned run, walking two and striking out three for the win.

White Sox first baseman Frank Thomas went 2-for-3. In his last nine games, he is 15-for-30 with two homers, three doubles and seven RBI.

With one out in the sixth, Baines hit his 326th career homer, moving him past Willie Horton into 59th place all-time.

At Texas, Billy Ripken's RBI single in the bottom of the seventh inning scored Damon Buford with the go-ahead run as the Rangers erased a five-run deficit for a 7-6 victory over the Boston Red Sox.

Will Clark added a three-run homer for Texas in the fifth as the Rangers rallied from 5-0 and 6-2 deficits.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Detroit	2	Cleveland	0
Toronto	1	Minnesota	0
Baltimore	11	Oakland	0
Chicago	4	Anaheim	2
New York	13	Kansas City	5
Texas	7	Boston	6
Seattle	9	Milwaukee	0

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Atlanta	3	Pittsburgh	1
St Louis	8	New York	2
Colorado	9	Philadelphia	0
Los Angeles	5	Chicago	2
Montreal	9	San Diego	3
San Francisco	2	Cincinnati	1 (10 Innings)

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NORTH		EAST	
♠ K J 5 3	♠ A 7 6	♠ A 7 6	♠ A 7 6
♥ A J 7 5 3	♥ 8	♥ 8	♥ 8
♦ 8	♦ 8	♦ 8	♦ 8
♣ 9 5 4	♣ 9 5 4	♣ 9 5 4	♣ 9 5 4
SOUTH		WEST	
♠ A Q 9 2	♠ A Q 9 2	♠ A Q 9 2	♠ A Q 9 2
♥ 8	♥ 8	♥ 8	♥ 8
♦ A 9 5 4	♦ A 9 5 4	♦ A 9 5 4	♦ A 9 5 4
♣ A 7 3	♣ A 7 3	♣ A 7 3	♣ A 7 3

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was certainly worth an invitational move, and South had more than enough to proceed to game.

West led the king of clubs, and declarer could count only seven fast winners — four trumps and three side-suit aces. Chances of building three more tricks from the red suits were slight. The best shot was to score the three aces and then try for seven trump tricks via a cross-trick. The one danger was that the defender with the ten of trumps might be able to overruff and return a trump, leaving declarer at least one trick short. South found a pretty way round this predicament.

There was no point to holding up on the opening lead. Declarer took the ace of clubs, cashed the aces of diamonds and hearts, then used a heart ruff to get the entry for a diamond ruff with the three of trumps. When both these tricks stood up, the contract was unbeat-

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Closure of TV station leads to fresh turmoil in Turkey

ANKARA (AFP) — The closure of a private television channel following a broadcast implicating Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller's husband in corruption led to fresh political turmoil in Turkey on Sunday.

"This is a sad move which will be corrected," Defence Minister Turhan Tanay, from Ms. Ciller's conservative True Path Party, told reporters.

"This is an indication that the government will crack down on media members broadcasting against the wills of the political power," the conservative main opposition Motherland Party added in a statement.

Police raided the headquarters of Flash TV in the western city of Bursa on Saturday evening, stopping its broadcast one day after the network's Istanbul studios were attacked by armed men.

The communications ministry, controlled by Ms. Ciller's True Path, ordered

Flash TV's closure as the channel "lacked permission to broadcast via radiolink systems."

"This is a scandal," said Deniz Baykal, leader of the opposition left-wing Republican People's Party.

"The government is using illegal methods to forcefully silence the opposition media," he told reporters in Istanbul.

About fifty unidentified assailants stormed the Istanbul studios of the network on Friday, firing shots in the air and assaulting journalists. They fled after the attack and police have so far failed to capture them.

"Those who are behind the attack are also responsible for the channel's closure," Flash TV's owner Omer Goktug was quoted as saying by NTV, another private channel.

Nazmi Baran, a spokesman for Flash TV's Ankara station, told reporters after the Friday attack that the assailants were linked to True Path,

conservative partners in Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's coalition government.

Mr. Baran alleged that the attack was in retaliation to a report broadcast by Flash TV on Thursday implicating the Ciller family in political corruption.

A leading member of the Turkish criminal underworld, Alaattin Cakici, claimed in the report that Ms. Ciller's husband, Ozer Ciller, had received \$20 million for exerting his influence in the privatisation of the Turkish Commercial Bank.

Mr. Baran said the network had received threats from True Path after the airing of the report.

Mr. Cakici is being sought by police for his part in several murders and political corruption scandals.

The closure of Flash TV caused an outrage in Bursa, with hundreds of people shouting slogans against Ms. Ciller and the government on the city's streets on Saturday and Sunday, media

reports said.

Flash TV partially resumed operations locally in Bursa area on Sunday, but it was still unable to broadcast to the nation via satellite.

Charged with corruption during her prime ministry between June 1993 and March 1996, Ms. Ciller later last year escaped trial by Turkey's supreme court with the support of Islamist coalition partners in three separate parliamentary votes.

She was accused of using illegal methods in developing her personal wealth and corruption in connection with the dealings of the state-run electricity distribution company and the partial privatisation of a car factory.

Flash TV's controversial closure increased political tension in Turkey, which was already high because of a bitter row between the pro-secular military and Mr. Erbakan's pro-Islamist Welfare Party over creeping Islamisation.



Palestinians clean out the Palestinian National Authority's Interior Ministry local branch in Al Ram, north of Jerusalem, that burned during the night, on Monday. A large number of documents used for issuing Palestinian IDs were destroyed. The Palestinian intelligence chief of the West Bank has accused Israel of being behind the fire (AFP photo)

Israeli indicted for alleged illegal arms deals with Iran

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli businessman was indicted Monday for allegedly selling weapons material to Iran, a court spokesman said.

A Tel Aviv court charged businessman Nahum Manbar, 51, with "grave offences against the state," said the spokesman, but the court barred release of details of the indictment due to the sensitive nature of the case.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported Monday that Mr. Manbar was to be indicted for treason and espionage for allegedly selling Iran material which could be used to manufacture chemical weapons.

Mr. Manbar was arrested secretly on March 27 when he flew into Israel from Europe, but his detention was kept secret until April 16.

The businessman, worth an estimated \$200 million and who owns a Jerusalem professional basketball team, has been barred from the United States for his

alleged weapons sales to Iran.

The Haaretz said Mr. Manbar has refused to cooperate with intelligence officials, insisting all his dealings with Iran were carried out with the knowledge of the Israeli defence establishment.

The businessman has also argued that, since Iran is not officially at war with Israel, the treason charge is not applicable to him. Although Iran and Israel are enemies, they have never declared war on each other.

In section 99 of the law code covering treason, a citizen "who intentionally acts to aid an enemy in its war against Israel shall receive the sentence of the death penalty or life in jail."

The death penalty was only carried out once in Israel, in 1962 against former Nazi chief Adolf Eichmann.

Those charged with espionage can receive from 15 years to life in prison.

A Tel Aviv judge on April 25 extended Mr. Manbar's

remand, declaring the evidence against him was "sufficiently serious."

The judge also ordered defence attorney Amnon Zichoni not to reveal details of the case against his client to the public.

Israeli press reports said President Bill Clinton brought up Mr. Manbar's case when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Washington earlier this month.

Mr. Manbar moved from Israel to southern France in 1985 and became involved in international arms sales, notably via Poland.

In 1991, the Israeli Defence Ministry banned Israeli contacts with Mr. Manbar based on reports he was selling chemical weapons materials obtained in China to Iran.

Mr. Manbar denied in a 1995 interview with Haaretz that he had sold chemical weapons material to Iran, saying the sales involved only protective clothing against chemical attacks.

5 more years needed to uncover Swiss-Nazi relationship — expert

TEL AVIV (AFP) — At least five more years of research are needed to fully uncover Switzerland's role in World War II, a leading historian said Monday ahead of the publication of a massive U.S. study into the handling of Nazi assets.

Jean-Francois Bergier, who heads an ad hoc committee set up by the Swiss government to explore its war-time links to Nazi Germany, said much more work was required to discover what became of Jewish assets deposited in Swiss banks.

"We must continue our work for at least five more years to establish the exact role played by Switzerland in World War II," he told a press conference two days before the scheduled publication of a major U.S. report on Nazi assets.

Avraham Burg, head of the para-state Jewish agency which has been spearhead-

ing efforts to shed light on Switzerland's wartime activities, told reporters that his organisation had recently found records of some 900 requests from relatives of Holocaust victims seeking information from Swiss banks about missing assets. The requests went unanswered, he said.

Mr. Burg also accused western European countries of having recovered economically following World War II "in part due to money stolen from Jews."

Jewish groups claim that dozens of billions of dollars in Jewish assets were lost through Swiss banks, including stolen funds laundered by Nazi officials and deposits of persons who perished in the Holocaust.

The Swiss government announced in March that it was creating a five billion dollar humanitarian fund to help victims of injustice, including the Holocaust.

U.S. Under-Secretary of Commerce Stuart Eizenstat, who led the team drawing up the U.S. report on Nazi assets, said Sunday the study was one of the most thorough in U.S. history.

He said the report would be accompanied by more than 200 source documents to bolster its legitimacy so that it could "stand up even in a court of law."

Though the bulk of the report focuses on the financial relationship between Switzerland and Germany during the war, Mr. Eizenstat noted that it also will shine the spotlight on the role of the U.S. government.

Newsweek magazine reports in its latest issue that the 700-page report, due to be released Wednesday, singles out Switzerland as the leading money launderer during World War II but adds the report contains no major new evidence or "smoking gun" on Swiss activities.

China, Iran to increase economic relations

BEIJING (AP) — Iran will help upgrade a Chinese oil refinery to enable China to import more Iranian oil, China's state-run Xinhua news agency said Sunday.

The deal was announced after Chinese Vice-Premier Li Langping, on a two-day visit to Iran, met Iranian Vice-President Mohammad Hashemi for talks Saturday on expanding trade ties and cooperation on science and technology.

Mr. Li expressed satisfaction at China's economic ties with Iran but said there was room for more growth and stressed the "great significance" of increasing cooperation on oil, Xinhua said in a dispatch from Tehran.

It said China accepted an offer from Iran to equip a Chinese oil refinery with the ability to handle Iranian crude oil, which has a high sulfur content, "in order to buy more Iranian oil."

Iran and China exchanged \$781 million in trade last year, a 54.7 per cent increase over 1995, Xinhua said.

China exported electrical machines, equipment, chemical and textile products. Iran's main exports to China were crude oil, minerals and rolled steel, it said.

Mr. Li will visit Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, Chile and Argentina after Iran.

China bars deposed leader from statesman's funeral

BEIJING (R) — China's former Communist Party Chief Zhao Ziyang, purged after the army crushed demonstrations for democracy in 1989, has been barred from attending the funeral of elder statesman Peng Zhen, a source said Monday.

Diplomats say China's current leadership remains nervous about the lingering influence and ambitions of Mr. Zhao, 78, whose liberal political and economic policies made him popular in the party and among the public.

Mr. Zhao had asked for permission to attend the funeral of Mr. Peng in Beijing Monday, but his successor, Jiang Zemin, vetoed the plan, said the source close to Mr. Zhao, who

asked not to be identified. No reason was given.

The People's Daily, mouthpiece of the Communist Party, paid tribute to Mr. Peng Monday, giving a half-page spread to photographs of the party veteran, who died in Beijing on April 26 at the age of 95.

The funeral is expected to receive widespread publicity on the nightly evening television news and in official newspapers.

The leadership fears Mr. Zhao could be a wild card if he were to reemerge from the political wilderness in a post-Deng Xiaoping power struggle, diplomats say.

Mr. Zhao returned to Beijing on May 2 after travelling outside the Chinese

capital for four-and-a-half months, said the source.

Mr. Zhao was in the eastern city of Hangzhou when Mr. Deng, China's paramount leader, died on Feb. 19 and he was barred by Mr. Jiang from attending Mr. Deng's funeral in Beijing on Feb. 25.

Mr. Zhao left Hangzhou for his old political power base, southwestern Sichuan province, in March before returning to the capital last week, the source said.

Mr. Deng had named Mr. Zhao as his successor in 1987 only to sack him two years later for sympathising with student demonstrators.

Mr. Zhao has not been seen in public since May 19, 1989.

2 SLA militia men, 3 civilians wounded in Lebanon bombings

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — Two militiamen of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) and three civilians were wounded on Monday in bombings by Iranian-backed Hizbollah guerrillas in southern Lebanon, security sources said.

A bomb went off near the village of Al Marj in Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon, the sources said.

Three Lebanese civilians were slightly wounded and

admitted to hospital in the town of Marjayoun, they said.

A second explosive charge blew up at the same site as an SLA patrol rushed to evacuate the casualties, they said. Two militiamen were wounded.

The Iranian-backed Shiite movement Hizbollah, which spearheads a campaign aimed at forcing Israeli troops out of southern Lebanon, took credit for both attacks in a statement released in Beirut.

The SLA-run Voice of the South radio station confirmed the bombings and casualties.

It accused Hizbollah of violating an April 26, 1996 cease-fire accord by planting "a bomb on a main road and wounding civilians."

The truce, which put an end to Israel's "Grapes of Wrath" offensive against Hizbollah in Lebanon last year that left 175 people dead, barred combatants from targeting civilians.

International troubles push Iran's nuclear programme years back

NEW YORK (AP) — Iran's nuclear programme, once thought to have its sights set on a bomb by 2000, has run into roadblocks and won't hit its weapons target until well into the next century, Israeli and other sources report.

"They are going to make it in the end," said a senior Israeli intelligence official. "But it will be the middle of the next decade."

The receding timetable, the result in part of U.S. pressure on Iran's nuclear suppliers, could ease any international concern that Israel will follow through sometime soon on threats to attack Iran's nuclear sites.

The Iranians deny they want to build nuclear arms. "Definitely not. I hate this weapon," President Hashemi Rafsanjani replied when asked in a recent CBS "60 Minutes" interview whether his government

seeks the bomb.

But the U.S. government and independent analysts say the kinds of nuclear equipment the Iranians have tried to buy for their nuclear energy programme clearly suggest plans for weapons development.

It is not surprising Iran would want to "go nuclear," some say, in view of the efforts by longtime enemy Iraq to build a bomb.

"If you were Iranian, would you disregard what Iraq has done?" asked Mustafa Kibaroglu, a Turkish specialist in nuclear proliferation.

The U.S. pressure has focused on Russia's 2-year-old project to build Iran's first nuclear power reactor, at Bushehr on the Arab Gulf coast. After completing plant construction suspended by the Germans in 1979, the Russians will install a 1,000-megawatt, Russian-

made reactor.

The plant would not contribute directly to weapons development, but U.S. officials worry that training and technology supplied to the civilian side will spill over into a military programme.

They also are concerned that plutonium embedded in the reactor's spent fuel could be reprocessed into bomb material — if Iran somehow obtains the necessary technology.

Washington scored a major success two years ago when it persuaded Russia to cancel part of the deal: the building of a gas-centrifuge plant in Iran to enrich uranium, the process that produces power-plant fuel and, if intensified, highly enriched uranium (HEU). Like plutonium, HEU can make a bomb.

Then, last month, Ukraine responded to U.S. appeals and announced it would not

supply turbines for the Bushehr project. The Moscow government later said it had a substitute supplier, in Russia.

Among other setbacks slowing Iran's nuclear development:

— Under U.S. pressure, the Prague government blocked a Czech company's plans to sell reactor equipment to the Iranians.

— Financing for Bushehr was reported delayed because Iran objected to the presence of Jews among the officials of the Russian bank involved.

— The Russian construction chief at Bushehr told Moscow Television the project is a year behind schedule because, among other things, he must take anti-earthquake measures that were not anticipated.

— China suspended plans to supply two smaller power reactors to Iran. It is unclear

whether U.S. pressure contributed to the Chinese decision.

"None of the problems are insurmountable," said the Israeli intelligence officer, who spoke with a reporter on condition he not be identified.

But Gerald M. Steinberg, an Israeli defence scholar, said the problems are serious enough to have limited Iran's nuclear programme to "a year or two of progress since 1991."

"Given the pressure from the United States, they're not likely to get a nuclear capability in five years," he said.

In 1992, the CIA projected Iran would be a nuclear weapon state by 2000. By 1995, John Holm, director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, was estimating the Iranians could develop a bomb by 2003. But when he appeared

before a house panel in Washington two months ago, Mr. Holm pegged the Iranian target date in the 2005-2007 range.

"I think they have slipped rather than gained on the timetable," he said.

Mr. Kibaroglu sees an even longer road toward a dependable Iranian bomb, one compact enough to be delivered by available aircraft or missiles.

"Our impression is that it will take at least 15 years to assemble a high-quality nuclear weapon, in view of their level of technology, expertise, material," said the Turkish expert, currently at California's Monterey Institute of International Studies.

The Iranians may be looking for a shortcut, however, by buying plutonium or highly enriched uranium on the international black market, proliferation specialists

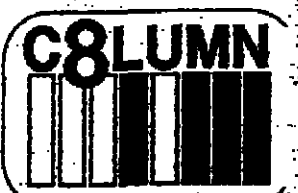
say.

The experts also are concerned about China's seeming indecision over whether to cancel the sale to Iran of a plant to produce uranium hexafluoride — the raw material for enrichment.

Gregory Webb, a specialist at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, said Iran doesn't need enrichment technology, since it can buy reactor fuel on the open market.

The "hex" plant really puts up a warning flag," he said. "It serves to confirm U.S. suspicions."

The watchdogs are not letting down their guard. Neither are the Iranians: Moscow Television reported from Bushehr that the huge nuclear site has been ringed with anti-aircraft batteries, alert for whatever may lie down the road.



Supermodel Claudia Schiffer to steal the limelight from pyramids

CAIRO (AFP) — German supermodel Claudia Schiffer is set to steal the limelight from the pyramids during a fashion show at the monuments later this month. The sphinx and the pyramids are expected to play second fiddle to the star of the runway as Schiffer and 20 Italian models display the latest designs of Italian couturiers such as Moschino, Azzaro, Tomaso, Stefaneli and jewellery signed Michaelis on May 13. Organisers said Monday that tickets for the 2,000-seat show are selling fast at prices ranging from 750 Egyptian pounds (\$220) to 350 Egyptian pounds (\$100). "We negotiated for a year with Schiffer's agency (Elite) to get Claudia here and to schedule everything," said a spokesman for the Egyptian organisers. "The sphinx and the pyramids will be lit up as usual and serve as a backdrop only," he said. French couturier Pierre Cardin held a fashion show at the pyramids several years ago, achieving what organisers said was the "dream of a lifetime."

Beg for cash and you'll get the lash

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A few weeks after emirate began flogging rash drivers, it has decided to extend the punishment to beggars. "We have decided to enforce flogging because it is an effective deterrent," a security official in Ras Al Khaimah said. "We keep warning the expatriates not to beg because it is banned and begging is distorting the image of our country. We have tried fines and imprisonment but they were not effective." On Monday, local newspapers reported an India would receive 40 lashes in public after he was caught begging. He was also deported. Th Indian, Razak A., confessed to "practising begging for a long time to make money." A Itihad daily said. Ra Al Khaimah near a strategic Hormuz Strait is one of the seven sheikhdoms making up the oil-rich United Arab Emirates (UAE), where Indians account for nearly one fifth of the population of 2.3 million.

Wish you were here... 87 years later

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — A letter posted in Copenhagen in 190 finally arrived at its destination in April after spending 87 years in the Russian postal system, regional Nordjyllands Radio reported Monday. The letter was mailed by an eight-year-old girl, Agersted, western Denmark, the radio said. According to the radio, the letter was sent by mistake to Tsarist Russia, from where it was sent back without comment to the Danish postal authorities last month. The letter bore no Russian postal markings, it said. "We very much regret this delay," wrote the head of the mail service for the northern Danish region of Frederikshavn to a relative of the now-deceased addressee. "We hope that your family, despite everything, will be happy to receive such a beautiful letter."

